

THE VISUAL EXPRESSION OF BAGRATUNI RULERSHIP:
CEREMONIAL AND PORTRAITURE*

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Abstract

The following pages trace the influence of Abbasid ceremonial and the evolution of a distinctly Armenian confirmation of rulership, and compare its royal message to that conveyed by Bagratuni royal imagery. This analysis utilizes both medieval texts and the surviving monuments and is divided into two sections. The first examines the textual descriptions of investitures, including the presentation of robes and regalia. The Abbasid ceremonial paradigm is characterized, and its effect on Bagratuni investiture ceremonial is demonstrated. In the discussion that follows I suggest that while Bagratuni ceremonial underwent substantial modification in response to the changing political climate, its symbolic message remained constant, emphasizing the king's piety over his temporal power. The second section of this study compares the royal message of these ceremonials with that conveyed by royal portraits. An analysis of Bagratuni portraits surviving from the latter-half of the tenth century demonstrates that they visually convey the ideology of kingship expressed in the investitures of the first three Bagratuni kings of Armenia. The final Bagratuni portrait dates to the mid-eleventh century and seemingly breaks from the established conventions of royal imagery. This image raises questions regarding patronage and the traditions of royal representation among the minor branches of the Bagratuni house.

Introduction

This study focuses on ceremonial and royal imagery in Armenia during the period of Bagratuni rule (884-1045 CE). As the following pages make clear, Bagratuni Armenia was divided into a number of separate

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principalities, with many opposing family dynasties seeking to extend their power over their rivals. Regional loyalties dominated and ideas of Armenian unity were largely conceptual — effected by adherence to a common language or Christian confession rather than to any single political entity. At this time Armenia was a vassal state of the Abbasid caliphate administered by an *ostikan*, or resident governor, whose primary residence was in Partaw, in modern-day Azerbaijan¹. Armenia had been without a king since the end of Aršakuni rule in 428; it was rather the prince (*išxan*) and, in the ninth century, the presiding prince who was recognized as the authority over all other Armenian princes and who was entrusted with the collection and forwarding of taxes to the *ostikan*².

In 884/85 Ašot Bagratuni was invested as Ašot I, becoming the first medieval king of Armenia and establishing a dynasty that would endure for one hundred and sixty years. Ašot's successors faced formidable external challenges, including the *ostikan*'s increasing control of the country and the eastward expansion of the Byzantine empire³. Internally, Bagratuni rule was undermined by the civil wars constantly raging amongst the hereditary Armenian nobility, the *naxarar*, who sought to usurp Bagratuni power or to free themselves from Bagratuni suzerainty. In 908 Gagik Arçruni, grandson of Ašot I, established the independent kingdom of Vaspurakan in southern Armenia. By the second half of the tenth century rivalries within the Bagratuni family further partitioned the country.⁴ Yet despite these chronic difficulties the Bagratuni kings achieved greater regional power and an increasingly independent status for Armenia. The Bagratuni period was also one of increased trade and prosperity. Armenia's strategic posi-

¹ The fundamental study of the Islamic administration of Armenia, and of Armenian-Islamic interactions, is TER-GHEWONDYAN, 1976. For the term *ostikan* see "ostikan," Appendix III, 551 in [PS.] P'AWSTOS BUZAND, 1989. In the Bagratuni period the *ostikan* was also the emir of Azerbaijan (Armenian Atrpatakan, Greek Atropatene). While the *ostikan*'s primary residence was in Partaw, the former capital of the Caucasian Albanian kings, in the tenth century the northern Armenian city of Duin served as his base within Armenia. See MANANDYAN, 1965. For Partaw in the pre-Bagratuni period see MOVSEŠ DASXURANC'I, 1961.

² YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 1987, 125.

³ Byzantium annexed the southwestern principality of Tarōn in 967/68, Vaspurakan in 1021 and, in 1045 claimed the former Bagratuni capital of Ani, bringing to an end the rule in Armenia of the main branch of the Bagratuni family. See YUZBASHIAN, 1973-74, 139-183 esp. 140-145, 148-154; GARSOĪAN, 1997b, 187-98.

⁴ The internal division of the kingdom of Armenia began in 961 with the declaration of Mušel, brother of Ašot III, as king of the western district of Kars. In the following decade Ašot III's son Gurgēn was proclaimed king of the northern district of Tašir-Joraget, and in 982 the Bagratuni prince of Siwnik' declared himself king. These events are discussed below.

tion on the east-west trade routes insured it an important role in international commerce, and Armenian-manufactured goods were in demand in both Byzantium and the neighboring Arab countries⁵.

Art, Ceremonial, and Texts

Any assessment of the visual expression of Bagratuni rulership is hampered by the paucity of surviving works of princely or royal art. The successive foreign invasions of Armenia during the fifth through the ninth centuries have left only a few surviving examples and, as we shall see below, those remaining from the tenth and eleventh centuries are scarcely more numerous⁶. Modern conflicts have frequently led to the further damage or destruction of surviving works or have prevented their proper archaeological exploration. There is, however, a relative wealth of contemporary historical accounts.

Two works are particularly useful. Yovhannēs [John] V Drasxanakertc'i was the *kat'olikos* of the Armenian Church from 897/98 to 924/25. Known as John the Historian, he wrote *The History of Armenia* to illustrate the fatal consequences of civil war to the feuding Armenian princes, beginning his work under the patronage of the Bagratuni kings of Armenia and finishing it under the protection of Gagik Arcruni, king of Vaspurakan⁷. The second text, *The History of the House of the Arcruni*, was written by T'ovma [Thomas] Arcruni, a kinsman of Gagik Arcruni and a contemporary of the *kat'olikos*. The work was commissioned by Gagik to glorify the ancestry and accomplishments of his family. Thomas records events through 904, when the narrative is taken up

⁵ Armenia's resultant prosperity is reflected in the growth of great trading cities such as Kars, Arcn (near Karin/Theodosiopolis), and Ani. Ani was established as the Bagratuni capital in 961, and within forty years its expanding population required the construction of a second fortification wall which increased by threefold the city's original size. Ani's wealth was displayed in its lavish court and administrative buildings, but it gained particular fame for its sacred structures and was known as the city of "one thousand and one churches." The fundamental study of Ani is by MARR, 1939. See also CUNEO, ALPAGNOVELLO, 1984. For the prosperity of the Bagratuni kingdom see HEWSEN, 1998, 39-48; GARSOÏAN, 1997a, 143-86, esp. 176-84.

⁶ The church of Mren, dating to the second or third decade of the seventh century, retains depictions of the prince Nerseh Kamsarakan and the prince David Šaharuni. See N. and M. THIERRY, 1975, 73-114. A prince of Siwnik' is depicted in the church at Sisavan, dated to 691; see DER MANUELIAN, 1984, 185, plate 6. Nothing survives from the eighth and ninth centuries.

⁷ YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 8, 232. The text reflects his shift in patronage. At first critical of Gagik Arcruni, the *kat'olikos* later praises him and notes the deficiencies of Bagratuni rule. For the designation of the *kat'olikos* as John V (and not John VI) see the comments by Maksoudian, *ibid.* 13 n. 61.

by an Anonymous Continuator who retells many events previously related by T'ovma, and who also continues the history of Gagik's reign⁸.

These texts, with their descriptions of cities, churches, works of art, and ceremonies, supplement the surviving monuments and allow a reconstruction of the material culture of Bagratuni Armenia. They also provide the context for the development of a visual expression of Bagratuni rulership.

The Ceremonial Paradigm

Descriptions of ceremonies accorded to and by Bagratuni kings reveal much about the medieval Armenian concept of rulership. The writings of T'ovma Arcruni and Yovhannēs Draxanakertc'i are replete with descriptions of ceremonies in which the caliphate grants honors and titles to *naxarar*. The earliest ninth-century ceremony for which there exists a contemporary, detailed description involves Gurgēn Arcruni, a senior member of the family that controlled the southern principality of Vaspurakan. In the mid-ninth century the Abbasid caliph al-Mutawakkil sent the Turkic general Bugha the Elder to suppress an Armenian rebellion. Those *naxarar* not killed in the ensuing conflict were deported to the caliphal city of Samarra. Some few remained at large and continued to wage war against Bugha's forces; chief among them was Gurgēn Arcruni. In 851/52, after several years of armed resistance, Gurgēn was persuaded by Bugha to accept investiture as prince of Vaspurakan. According to T'ovma Arcruni, Gurgēn traveled with his army to Bugha's camp. There, with standards flying and flags rippling in the breeze, Bugha placed a "princely crown on his head and royal garments on his person, girded him with a sword, and set him on a finely adorned mule." He was escorted from the camp by an armed Islamic military escort in full uniform. The sound of drums and trumpets filled the air, a herald proclaimed his lands and title, and ax bearers stood guard, ready to push aside "the pressing throng."⁹

A comparison of Gurgēn's ceremony with those accorded to other *naxarar* in the same decade reveals just how unique were the honors granted to Gurgēn. His is the only recorded investiture of an Armenian prince that includes the bestowal of a crown. Indeed, the only other contemporary ceremony to equal Gurgēn's in splendor is one at which the

⁸ Two further Anonymous Continuators take the history beyond the life of Gagik Arcruni; see the comments by R. Thomson in T'OVMA ARCRUNI, 1985, 16-17.

⁹ T'OVMA ARCRUNI, 216.

caliph officiated¹⁰. Bugha's motivation for providing such lavish honors is, I suggest, revealed in Gurgēn's subsequent fate: three days after his investiture he was seized and sent into captivity. The extraordinary distinctions extended by Bugha thus seem intended as bait to lure Gurgēn and ensure his capture¹¹.

With Gurgēn Arcruni in Samarra the foremost of the Arcruni *naxarar* not imprisoned was a second Gurgēn Arcruni, known for clarity as Gurgēn son of Apupelč. In 854 Bugha formally granted this Gurgēn dominion over Vaspurakan, recognizing him as both prince and general. According to T'ovma Arcruni, Bugha did not attend the ceremony but sent a representative to officiate in his name. Gurgēn son of Apupelch was presented with a princely sword and belt and with rods emblematic of his authority as general. He was also given a "spirited horse that stamped its foot imperiously, ideal for riding to war."¹²

In 858 many of the imprisoned *naxarar* were released from Samarra after vowing to aid al-Mutawakkil in the defense of Armenian territory against a perceived Byzantine threat. Because many had died in the conflict or in prison there was an official re-apportionment of lands and titles in a ceremonial that also served to reaffirm the caliphate's suzerainty. T'ovma Arcruni describes the honors afforded to Derenik and Ašot Arcruni, his patron's father and grandfather. They were brought before the caliph who personally "clothed them with garments, set [in their hands] a princely banner, girded them with a sword and belt adorned with precious stones, and [gave them] a select and richly ornamented horse." They were then sent from the hall "in glorious splendor and notable honor to the sound of singing and the blowing of trumpets," while heralds "with voices loud and clear" declared their new titles¹³.

¹⁰ This ceremony occurred in 858 and is discussed below.

¹¹ YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 123-24. LAURENT, 1922, 156-88, notes that Bugha frequently resorted to such tactics. The writings of John the Historian offer further confirmation. One year after Gurgēn's imprisonment Bugha used a similar ruse to capture the *sparapet* Smbat Bagratuni, the father of the future Bagratuni king Ašot I. Bugha promised Smbat that if he went to Samarra the caliph would grant him control over Armenia and give him "royal gifts and honors" before sending him back to his lands. Smbat accompanied Bugha to the royal court and appeared before the caliph, but rather than being singled out for ceremonial recognition he was "ranked along with the rest" of the captive *naxarar* and imprisoned.

¹² T'OVMA ARCRUNI, 262. Gurgēn's remarkable career is analyzed by LAURENT, 1922, see esp. 174 for his investiture.

¹³ T'OVMA ARCRUNI, 265. Only one horse was presented because only the younger prince Derenik, who was still a minor, was actually allowed to return to Armenia; his father Ašot was released several years later. Such small details inspire confidence in T'ovma's account.

While T'ouma is concerned only with the Arcruni, he does note that before the ceremony the caliph first entertained all the *naxarar* in his banqueting hall "and promised to restore to *each one* his lands in inheritance."¹⁴ This suggests that the ceremonial recognition which followed was not restricted to the Arcruni princes but was accorded to all those who were to be released.

Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i's brief description of the elevation of the Bagratuni *sparapet* [commander-in-chief] Ašot to the status of presiding prince corresponds to the descriptions of ceremonies discussed above¹⁵. According to the *kat'otikos* the *ostikan* came to Armenia in 862 "in accordance with the orders of the caliph" and invested Ašot (later Ašot I) "with many robes as well as royal insignia."¹⁶ The *kat'otikos* confirms the *de facto* royal status granted by this highest of ranks, observing that after Ašot's appointment all the *naxarar* aspired to marry into the Bagratuni house in order to "be distinguished from the other *naxarar* houses as members of the royal family."¹⁷

The shared features of these and other ceremonial recognitions of *naxarar*, as reported by the contemporary Armenian historians, indicate that the caliphate employed a standard ceremony¹⁸. Each featured invest-

¹⁴ T'OVMA ARCRUNI, 265. Emphasis added.

¹⁵ For the office of *sparapet* and its origination in Sasanid Persia see the overview provided by BEDROSIAN, 1983, 6-46; "*sparapet*," Appendix III, 560-61, [PS.] P'AWSTOS BUZAND; ADONTZ, 1972, 354ff..

¹⁶ YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 125-26. Ašot acceded to the title of *sparapet* in 856. As noted above, this title was previously held by Ašot's father Smbat, who died in Samarra. T'OVMA ARCRUNI, 255, indicates that Ašot, who was not imprisoned but was allowed to remain in Armenia to oversee the Bagratuni lands, was appointed to his new rank by Bugha, but he does not provide details of the ceremony. YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 125, 269 nt. 7, 271 nt. 2, notes only that Ašot upon his elevation was "given greater recognition than almost all of his predecessors," due to his honor and ability to refrain from war.

¹⁷ YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 126.

¹⁸ For the *ostikan* Yusuf's later, unsuccessful attempt to honor the Gnuni brothers Gurgēn and Davit with the same ceremony see STEP'ANOS TARÖNEL'I (also known as Asolik, or the singer), 1920, 20. This ceremony was not restricted to Armenia. In 857/58 Bugha attacked Albania, where, according to T'ovma Arcruni, his army was defeated twenty-eight times by Albanian forces under the command of prince Esayi Apumusē. When Bugha refused to admit defeat, letters were sent to the caliph requesting aid in ending the conflict. The caliph's reply guaranteed a pardon to Apumusē for the damages sustained by the royal army, and also promised "honorable and expensive garments with a decorated helmet and sword" if he would submit peacefully to Bugha and then present himself before the caliph. On his way to Bugha's camp Apumusē was met by companies of the royal army bearing gifts of armaments and richly adorned horses. Apumusē was then escorted to the general's camp by a procession of musicians and singers. He was graciously entertained by the general, presented with honors and "gifts in accordance with the caliph's orders," and then escorted to Samarra by members of Bugha's cavalry.

ment with Islamic robes, the presentation of swords, belts, or other symbols of rank, and generally also included the gift of a horse or mule¹⁹. The more lavish ceremonies also featured heralds to proclaim lands and titles and musicians to accompany the public presentation of the honoree. Although standardized, the ceremony was extremely flexible and easily adapted. It could be held outside, in the military camp of an Islamic commander or of the *ostikan*, or it could take place in a formal ceremonial space, such as the caliphal banqueting hall. The caliph could officiate or the honors could be accorded by his representatives — but of course, the higher the rank of the presiding official the greater the honor to the recipient²⁰. While suitable for honoring one person, T'ovma Arcruni's account of the ceremony held in Samarra in 858 suggests that it could also be expanded into a grand production capable of processing many honorees.

The Evolution of Bagratuni Ceremonial: 884-928

Ašot I ruled as presiding prince for twenty-two years before he was elevated to royal status in 884. The extraordinary length of time between his recognition as presiding prince and his royal investiture underscores the difficulties in restoring a monarchy to tenth-century Armenia. There was no clearly established precedent for the internal election or appointment of an Armenian king²¹. Historically, Armenian kingship was designated and supported by the controlling foreign power, and unless removed succession was hereditary within a designated royal family. The Bagratuni could not lay historic claim to royal status; they had

T'ovma later notes that Apumusē was among those imprisoned in Samarra with the Armenian princes; T'OVMA ARCRUNI, 240-49, 255. The *kat'otikos* has a different version, noting that Apumusē was “deceitfully” seized by Bugha, YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 123. For Esayi Apumusē see LAURENT/CANARD, 1980, 143, 380-81; MOVSĒS DASXURANC'I, III 19.

¹⁹ For the systemization of ceremonial by the Abbasid caliphate see AL-AZMEH, 1997, 134-35. As we have seen, only one recorded ceremony features the bestowal of a crown to a non-royal recipient. This, it has been suggested, was bait extended by Bugha to capture Gurgēn Arcruni.

²⁰ See, for example, the 919 investiture of Gagik Arcruni by the caliph, discussed below, to which the Arcruni historian gives much greater attention than Gagik's previous two investitures by the *ostikan*.

²¹ The *naxarar* did infrequently petition the controlling power for the installation of a particular candidate from the acknowledged royal or pre-eminent family, and often used the *kat'otikos* as their intermediary. For examples in the Aršakuni period and for evidence of the continuation of this process into the Arab period see MOVSĒS KHORENATS'I, 1978, 257-58, 295; T'OVMA ARCRUNI, 145; YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 82, 86, 104, 105; VARDAN AREWELC'I. 1989, 168, 169.

served as coronants (*t'agadir*) to the Armenian Aršakuni kings²². They were also hampered by their historically poor pious reputation.

The Bagratuni rise to power began in the *marzpanate* (428-652), the period following the partition of Armenia between Sasanid Persia and Byzantium. During this time an enduring rivalry developed between the Bagratuni and the Mamikonean, the pre-eminent *naxarar* house²³. The Bagratuni pursued a generally pro-eastern policy, forming alliances with the Sasanid kings. The Mamikoneans were historically pro-western, forming alliances with Rome and then Byzantium²⁴. The opposing loyalties of these two houses were brought into sharp contrast in the mid-fifth century when Armenian resistance to the Sasanid imposition of Zoroastrianism culminated in the battle of Awarayr. The Bagratuni joined the traitor Vasak Siwni and fought with the Sasanid army, defeating the Armenians and their commander, Vardan Mamikonean²⁵. Vardan's death on the battlefield gained him martyr's status and granted his family an aura of pious authority. Historical texts of the fifth and later centuries celebrate Vardan's sacrifice and present the Mamikoneans as champions of orthodoxy. These same texts diminish or omit Bagratuni exploits after Awarayr, and this relative silence bears witness to the damage the Bagratuni's treacherous alliance caused their pious reputation²⁶.

Following the Arab invasions of Armenia in the 640s the Bagratuni transferred their loyalties from the Sasanid rulers to their new overlords and their secular power steadily increased. However, their pious persona continued to suffer in comparison to that of other princely houses, as they repeatedly failed to produce a martyr during the periods of Armenian resistance to Umayyad rule²⁷. It was not until the advent of the

²² YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 73; [PS.] P'AWSTOS BUZAND, 228-29, 563; TOUMANOFF, 1963, 139. The royal families of classical Armenia were most often collateral branches of the suzerain dynasty; the Bagratunis were, strictly speaking, the first Armenian kings. TOUMANOFF, 1969, 233-81.

²³ TOUMANOFF, 1963, 115-16 n. 118, 130-131 n. 229. For *naxarar* before the Arab domination of Armenia see "*naxarar*," Appendix III, 549 in [PS.] P'AWSTOS BUZAND; ADONTZ, 1970, 342ff. For Bagratuni-Mamikonean rivalry in the sixth-seventh centuries see GROUSSET, 1973, 318-19.

²⁴ For the Mamikonean see R. Thomson, "Appendix: The *Primary History*", in MOVSĒS KHORENATS'I, 357-68; "Mamikonean," Appendix I, 385-86 in [PS.] P'AWSTOS BUZAND; TOUMANOFF, 1963, 209-11.

²⁵ The battle was fought in 451. For Bagratuni support of the traitor Vasak Siwni against Mamikonean rule see ELIŠĒ, 1982, 144, 281.

²⁶ For the treatment of the Bagratunis in the writings of [Ps.] P'AWSTOS BUZAND — or the absence thereof — see "Bagratuni," Appendix I, 362-63 in [PS.] P'AWSTOS BUZAND; for the writings of Łazar P'arpec'i see ŁAZAR P'ARPEC'I, 1991.

²⁷ In 705 the Umayyad suppression of an Armenian rebellion resulted in the majority

Abbasid caliphate and the subsequent Armenian rebellions that the Bagratuni could finally claim a martyr to rival those of the other *naxarar*. In the battle of Bagrewand (774-75) the Bagratuni formed a unique alliance with the Mamikoneans and led the Armenian forces against the Abbasid army. The Armenians were slaughtered and the slain commanders Mušel Mamikonean and Smbat Bagratuni achieved martyr's status²⁸. The battle so decimated the *naxarar* that many of the previously dominant dynasties, including the Mamikonean, never regained their stature. The Bagratuni endured, thanks to their established pro-Arab policy and the refuge provided by their ancestral lands in the northern districts of Sper and Tayk'.

By the ninth century the Bagratuni had reestablished their loyalty to the caliphate and consolidated their position as the most powerful of the *naxarar*. They also greatly expanded their domain, using proceeds from the silver mines of Sper to buy the holdings of declining landed Armenian families. The ninth century also witnessed the continued redemption of their pious reputation. In 851 the caliph al-Mutawakkil initiated a fierce repression of the resurgent *naxarar*. As we have seen, by 855 most male members of Armenia's noble families had been deported to the caliphal city of Samarra and imprisoned²⁹. In 861 the *sparapet* Smbat Bagratuni was also imprisoned. While the other captive *naxarar* chose apostasy and the promise of freedom over death, Smbat refused to renounce his faith and died in Samarra in 862. His steadfastness gained him the appellation "the Confessor" and granted his family an aura of piety at a time of great national shame³⁰. With Smbat's martyrdom the pious reputation of the Bagratuni was, for the first time, on an even par with their acknowledged secular power.

The appointment of the Confessor's son Ašot to the status of presiding prince [*išxanac' išxan*] in 862 effectively marks the start of Bagratuni rule in Armenia³¹. The decision to elevate Ašot to royal status in

of *naxarar* being burned alive in a church at Nakhchawan. Smbat Bagratuni, senior member of the Bagratuni clan, had taken refuge in Byzantine-held Tayk' and thus escaped the flames. When he returned to Armenia in 709 the caliph appointed him prince [*išxan*] of Armenia. TOUMANOFF, 1963, 154; T'OVMA ARCRUNI, 170-71; YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 108-09.

²⁸ TOUMANOFF, 1963, 348-50; T'OVMA ARCRUNI, 314; GROUSSET, 312-22.

²⁹ For contemporary accounts of the Armenian rebellion, captivity in Samarra, and release see T'OVMA ARCRUNI, 189-277; YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 116-26.

³⁰ YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 117-18, 120, 122-25. The Confessor is notably absent from T'ovma Arcruni's account, which does include a lengthy description of the apostasy of the *naxarar* and focuses on Bagratuni apostasy in particular. T'OVMA ARCRUNI, 219-31.

³¹ The title *išxanac' išxan*, rendered as presiding prince or prince of princes, appears

884/85 was made by the *naxarar* rather than by the caliph or *ostikan*. "In view of the nobility of his family, the princes and *naxarar* of Armenia unanimously resolved to raise him up as king over themselves, and informed the caliph through the governor."³² The caliph demonstrated his agreement by sending the *ostikan* to Armenia with 'a royal crown' which was formally presented to Ašot together with robes, horses, weapons, and ornaments³³. Only the gift of a crown differentiates this ceremony from those which elevated Armenian nobles to lesser rank, confirming that the first recognition of the Bagratuni king was effected in an Abbasid ceremony. Ašot's royal status was then again acknowledged in a second, Armenian ceremony in which the *kat'otikos* Gēorg II blessed the new king and placed a crown upon his head³⁴.

When Ašot I died in 890 the succession of his eldest son, Smbat I, was contested by Ašot's brother Abas. Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i tells us that the Georgian prince of Iberia, Artirnerseh II, rallied Smbat to the defense of his throne. He forced Smbat "to divest himself of his mourning attire and to put on the royal robes."³⁵ This confirms the existence of a repository of Bagratuni regalia that were recognized as symbols of the *de facto* power of the king; the absence of any mention of a crown suggests that its use was restricted to the formal investiture ceremony³⁶. Smbat and Abas fought a brief war before agreeing to the terms of peace negotiated by the *kat'otikos*; only then was Smbat formally invested in the same double ceremony that had been accorded to his father. First the *ostikan* "came forth to meet him at the place of assembly" and presented Smbat with "a royal diadem" and "robes wrought with gold" as well as horses and armor. The king and his court then went to the cathedral with

for the first time in YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I'S account in reference to Bagarat Bagratuni, uncle of the future king Ašot I. YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 118. For a discussion of the title of presiding prince see MARKWART, 1913, 63-64.

³² YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 128.

³³ ID., 128.

³⁴ ID., 128.

³⁵ ID., 131.

³⁶ For princely insignia granted to Armenian rulers by the imperial court during the *marzpanate* see TOUMANOFF, 1963, 134-35, nts. 233-35. Uxtanēs, the bishop of Sebastea writing in the last decade of the tenth century, indicates that the treasury of the *kat'otikosate* preserved the regalia of kings from the pre-Arab period. He claims to have seen the "precious vestment" of Trdat the Great that was given to the church c. 607 as a "gift for sacred use." There is however no indication of its continued *royal* use. UKHTANES, 1988, 85, 152 nt. 38.1. The *kat'otikos* later confirms the existence of a Bagratuni royal treasury in his description of his diplomatic journey to Partaw in 908. He went loaded with gifts for the *ostikan*, which, he remarks, came from the "royal treasuries." YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 163.

the *kat'otikos* who “pronounced the solemn blessings” on Smbat, invested him with “gold-embroidered robes covered with expressive designs,” and placed a royal crown on his head³⁷.

The textual accounts of the investitures of the first two Bagratuni kings of Armenia clearly indicate the separate nature of the Abbasid and Armenian ceremonies. They not only featured different participants, they occurred in different settings and followed different procedures. For the investiture of both Ašot I and Smbat I the *ostikan* first ceremonially presented the new king with a crown, luxurious robes, and other sumptuous gifts in the presence of the assembled Armenian and Abbasid armies. Both kings were then invested a second time in a ceremony performed by the *kat'otikos* in the major church of the current Bagratuni capital³⁸. The *kat'otikos* blessed each ruler, placed a crown on his head, and sometimes also invested him with royal robes.

The double investitures accorded to Ašot I and Smbat I confirmed and displayed different aspects of Armenian kingship. In Abbasid ceremonial the crown was reserved for military recognition of victorious commanders and was deemed inappropriate for use by the caliph³⁹. This restricted use supports the interpretation of the symbolic message of the Abbasid investiture of Armenian kings as being solely expressive of the king's temporal power. The caliphal gift of a crown and robes, ceremonially presented to the Bagratuni king by the *ostikan*, proclaimed the king's status, acknowledged the source of his power, and also served to rank him within the Abbasid sphere of influence.⁴⁰ The subsequent reli-

³⁷ YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 132.

³⁸ The Bagratuni capital was peripatetic until 961, when it was established at Ani. The precise location of Ašot I's Armenian investiture is not specified, but is believed to have been at Bagaran, the current Bagratuni capital. YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 274 n. 6; TER-GHEWONDYAN, 1976, 59. For Smbat I, the *kat'otikos* clearly states that the Armenian investiture took place in a church that he does not identify; YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 132. The thirteenth-century historian Vardan notes that Smbat was invested in the church he had built at Erazgawork', but he is apparently confused, as he goes on to note that Smbat built this church “after receiving royal status.” VARDAN AREWELC'I, 187. No location is specified for Ašot II's investiture in 918; see YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 205.

³⁹ AL-AZMEH, 12.

⁴⁰ There are precedents for the recognition of an Armenian king by foreign powers — precedents that were well known in the Middle Ages. For the AD 66 coronation in Rome of the first Armenian Aršakuni king, Trdat (Tiridates) I by Nero see SUETONIUS, 1939, 107-09. T'ovma Arcruni's awareness of this event is clear in his description of the honors bestowed upon one (probably legendary) Arcruni ancestor named Xuran by the emperor Tiberius “in the stadium” of Rome. See T'OVMA ARCRUNI, 112, n.5 For the recognition of Trdat the Great by Constantine see AGAT'ANGELOS, 1976, 61, 409-13; YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 80; “Trdat,” Appendix I, 416, in [P.S.] P'AWSTOS BUZAND.

gious ceremony served a very different function. The investment of the king by the *kat'otikos* validated the recipient's pious worthiness⁴¹. This is confirmed by John the Historian's characterization of Smbat I's Armenian investiture as "spiritual nuptials," from which he emerged to "rule over all of Armenia."⁴² The Bagratuni double investiture ceremony can be seen as the symbolic unification, in the person of the king of Armenia, of the seemingly disparate aspects of Bagratuni rule: Armenian suzerainty to the caliphate and Armenian Orthodox faith.

While the writings of T'ovma Arcruni and Yovhannēs Draxanakertc'i indicate that the double investiture ceremony was afforded only once to each Bagratuni king, some rulers did receive additional gifts of crowns and robes from the caliph or *ostikan*. Such gifts are first documented for the reign of Smbat I and reflect the increasingly unstable political situation in Armenia and the growing power of the Sadjid *ostikans*. In 902, after the death of the *ostikan* Afshin, Smbat successfully petitioned the caliph al-Moktafi for independence from Afshin's brother and successor, Yusuf. The caliph granted Smbat's request and sent him a royal robe, crown, gem-studded gold belt, and horses bedecked with arms and ornaments. The *kat'otikos* tells us that upon receipt of these gifts Smbat "submitted totally to the will of the caliph," suggesting that they served to formally mark the new agreement⁴³.

⁴¹ The investment of a medieval ruler by the spiritual head of the church was, of course, also known from Byzantium. For a discussion of the textual sources and bibliography see CAMERON, 1987, 106-36. Certainly the example of the patriarch of Constantinople investing the emperor was a convenient and potent model. For the view that later Bagratuni *ordo* were modeled on the Byzantine coronation ceremony see COWE, 1997, 11; COWE, 1992, 49-59. However, it may be suggested that the key to understanding the symbolic importance of the Armenian investiture of a Bagratuni king does not lie in the possible emulation of Byzantine ceremonial but is instead found in the *kat'otikos*' unique role in medieval Armenian society. The successive Sasanid, Byzantine, and Islamic occupations which buffeted Armenia from the fifth through ninth centuries not only threatened the political integrity of the country, each threatened the very existence of Armenian Orthodoxy. During this period the Armenian Church was central to the development of a national cultural identity and the *kat'otikos* was the unifying Armenian figure. In the absence of secular unity the *kat'otikos* took on many temporal roles, serving as judge and arbiter of civil disputes and representing Armenian princes in their negotiations with suzerain and other powers. The *kat'otikos* thus embodied a duality of piety and power that made him, prior to the restoration of a unified Armenia, the most significant Armenian authority. Yovhannēs, for example, represented Bagratuni kings in their negotiations with the *ostikan*; see YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 163-66. For the *kat'otikos*' role in Armenian-Byzantine diplomacy see below and YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 198. For examples of the *kat'otikos* as judge and arbiter of civil disputes see T'OVMA ARCRUNI, 269-70, 284, 286; YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 154, 202, 204-5.

⁴² YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 132.

⁴³ YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 155. Interestingly, the *kat'otikos* also notes that

Yusuf, angered by Smbat's move toward autonomy, marched against him. At the last minute a successful peace treaty was brokered and the king and *ostikan* "exchanged sealed copies of the solemn agreement they had made."⁴⁴

Another formal exchange of gifts occurred the following spring, when Yusuf quit Armenia for Partaw. The *ostikan* sent Smbat a jeweled crown, gold-embroidered robes and horses accoutered in gold-decorated armor. Yovhannēs Draxanakertc'i devotes particular attention to the crown which, he says, was "made out of gold and sapphire, and over which was a diadem studded with rows of pearls and other valuable gems." Yusuf also granted the title of presiding prince to Smbat's eldest son, Ašot II, and sent to him a girdle studded with gems and a swift horse as well as "ornaments, armor, and multicolored garments." "The *kat'otikos* too was "cordially honored" by Yusuf, and received what he terms "robes suitable for a man in my position" and a mule adorned with golden ornaments⁴⁵. Smbat reciprocated in properly royal fashion, sending Yusuf gifts that numbered "ten times more than what he had received."⁴⁶ This exchange between Yusuf and Smbat formally acknowledged the reestablishment of the status quo, which was further reinforced by Yusuf's recognition of the prince Ašot II as heir to the royal title. These additional presentations of regalia and other sumptuous gifts reaffirmed Bagratuni secular power and thus differed in function from the Bagratuni investiture ceremony.

The Abbasid court was not the only foreign power to formally bestow titles and honors on Armenian rulers. As the title king of Armenia constituted official recognition by the caliph, it is not surprising that the Byzantine emperor was quick to counter with his own recognition of Bagratuni kings. Basil I (867-886) recognized Ašot I with the title *archōn tōn archōnton* (prince of princes) in 884/85, immediately after his investiture by the *ostikan*. The title allowed the recipient several privileges, chief among them the right to be called the emperor's

Smbat was invited to the royal court by the caliph. There is no evidence that he went, but the matter-of-fact tone in which this information is related suggests that such visits were not extraordinary.

⁴⁴ YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 157. A seal attributed to Ašot I by KRACHKOV-SKAIA, 1946, bears only an Arabic inscription that reads "Ašot son of Smbat." I thank Boris Briker for translating this article from the Russian. For the redating of seals formerly dated to the Bagratuni period see YUZHASHIAN, 1974, 153-54.

⁴⁵ YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 157. The *kat'otikos*' power and influence entitled him to such recognition; while he does not so state, it is possible that Yovhannēs played a role in negotiating the peace.

⁴⁶ YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 158.

“beloved son.”⁴⁷ When Smbat I succeeded his father, the emperor Leo VI (886-912) acknowledged him with the same title and also sent him “beautiful weapons, ornaments, robes wrought with gold, goblets, and cups, and girdles of pure gold studded with gems” to confirm his status in the eyes of the Byzantine court⁴⁸. In addition to their titular distinctions the Bagratuni kings were also the yearly recipients of imperial gifts⁴⁹.

It was the prerogative of the Bagratuni king to confer honors and titles on foreign rulers and on members of the Armenian nobility. Textual evidence for the Bagratuni investment of foreign kings is limited to the elevation of Georgian princes and reflects the suzerainty of the Armenian Bagratuni over their Georgian kinsmen in this period⁵⁰. According to Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc‘i, in 899 Smbat I forged an alliance with Atrnerseh II, the prince of Iberia mentioned above. Smbat summoned him to Armenia and “crowned Atrnerseh king with great glory and proper ceremony, outfitting him in armor befitting kings.”⁵¹ Yovhannēs provides a more detailed account of Smbat’s investment of Atrnerseh’s son-in-law Constantine, the king of Egrisi, in 904. Smbat “dressed him in royal robes, placed on his head a golden crown studded with pearls, and girdled his waist with a golden belt set with gems. He also equipped him with the proper things necessary for traveling, and putting under his

⁴⁷ YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC‘I, 129. For the title *archōn tōn archōnton*, a translation of the Armenian *išxanac’ iṣṣan*, see below, n. 122. In addition to bestowing the privilege of being called the emperor’s “beloved son” (*philos hyios*) the title-bearer also received a chrysobull of three *solidi*; see CONSTANTINE VII PORPHYROGENITOS, 1829-30, II, 48; TOUMANOFF, 1963, 107 n. 165; 205 n. 200.

⁴⁸ YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC‘I, 138. As there is no textual evidence that either Ašot or his son traveled to Constantinople both must have received their titles from imperial envoys sent to Armenia. The awarding of the same title to Smbat’s son, Ašot II, and his imperial visit, is discussed below. Armenian texts document the recycling of such Byzantine, or Byzantine-produced, gifts. When Yusuf and Smbat exchanged gifts following their peace treaty of 902/03, among the gifts Smbat presented to the *ostikan* was “a belt made out of pure gold — the work of Roman craftsmen.” YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC‘I, 157-58. In 914 Yusuf offered two Gnunik’ princes many sumptuous gifts, among which were purple clothing and *byssus* — presumably these were originally from Byzantium. YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC‘I, 183.

⁴⁹ YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC‘I, 158.

⁵⁰ The principal dynasties in the two countries were closely related, the founder of the Georgian royal Bagrationi family being descended from the Armenian ruling Bagratuni family. The supremacy of the Armenian branch was, of course, given greater recognition by the Armenians and at times was denied by the Georgians. TOUMANOFF, 1963, 334-6, 407-28.

⁵¹ YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC‘I, 150-151. Atrnerseh also held the Byzantine title of *kuropalates*.

command an army, sent him to his domain.”⁵² These descriptions reveal that Smbat employed a ceremony modeled on the Abbasid paradigm to invest Georgian rulers. In each case the superiority of the Bagratuni king is clearly established as he assumes the role reserved in the Abbasid ceremony for the caliph or *ostikan*. Those receiving honors are summoned to Armenia and granted titles, sumptuous goods, and military support before being sent back to their lands⁵³.

Bagratuni kings more commonly granted ceremonial recognition to members of the Armenian nobility. Prior to Ašot I's assumption of royal status the caliph or his representative bestowed titles such as *marzpan* [general] and *sparapet*⁵⁴. After the establishment of the Bagratuni monarchy these and other titles were granted by the king or by a member of his family⁵⁵. The accounts of ceremonial recognitions during Ašot I's reign are too brief to provide a clear picture of their setting or procedural, but in at least one instance there is a connection with the Abbasid court. According to Yovhannēs, Ašot raised his son-in-law to the status of prince of Siwnik' "and obtained for him honor from the royal court," implying formal recognition by the caliph or his representative⁵⁶.

The 887 elevation of Ašot Arcruni to the rank of prince of Vaspurakan is described twice by T'ovma Arcruni. These successive accounts illustrate that the ability to grant titles and honors was one of the most

⁵² YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 159. This ceremony actually restored Constantine's existing status after his civil war with Atrnerseh and his subsequent imprisonment by Smbat. His release was occasioned by the promotion in Egrisi of a royal candidate even less inclined to defer to Smbat.

⁵³ STEP'ANOS TARÖNEL'I, 134, notes that Smbat II crowned Bagarat III king of Egrisi in 985, but does not provide any further details. I know of no later references to similar investitures.

⁵⁴ Both titles are Sasanid in origin, and their continued use during the Umayyad and Abbasid domination of Armenia reflects the perpetuation of Sasanid honorifics by the caliphate. For *sparapet* see above, n. 15; for the office of *marzpan* see CHRISTENSEN, 1936, 133ff.

⁵⁵ T'OVMA ARCRUNI, 291, 298, for such investitures by Šapuh, son of Ašot I, in Vaspurakan. These are discussed below.

⁵⁶ YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 126-27. This prince of Siwnik' was married to Ašot's daughter, Mariam. For the earlier history of the house of Siwni see "Siwni," Appendix I, 408-09, in [P.S.] P'AWSTOS BUZAND. The sparse accounts of these ceremonies in the tenth-century histories are frustrating. For Yovhannēs such lesser ceremonies seem to warrant less attention. T'ovma Arcruni and his Continuator are understandably loath to acknowledge displays of Bagratuni power over their Arcruni patrons. The *kat'olikos* does note that in 921 Ašot I's grandson, Ašot II, guaranteed the allegiance of two powerful Armenian princes who traveled to Ašot's camp and received "honors in a befitting manner," including the presentation of "glorious distinctions." YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 202. Step'anos Örbelean (1250/60-1304), notes that the princes came to Ašot's court to "receive investiture;" see STEP'ANOS ÖRBELEAN, 1866, I, 38, 118-19.

significant expressions of royal authority, as T'ovma first downplays the Bagratuni's role and then entirely omits their participation. He initially states that Ašot I's son Šapuh came to Vaspurakan and "conferred the principality" on Ašot Arcruni after his father's death⁵⁷. In his second account T'ovma removes all references to the Bagratuni and instead takes pains to present Ašot's accession as the result of mutual agreement amongst the three Arcruni brothers. "Demonstrating the extent of their fraternal deference, with incomparable courtesy each regarded the other two as superior to himself, reckoning the dignity of their princely rank to be equally shared. Merely for his precedence did they agree to give the dignity of prince to Ašot." ⁵⁸

Despite the decorum ascribed to them by T'ovma, the Arcruni brothers were minors when their father died and so their grandfather Ašot I appointed a regent to oversee Vaspurakan⁵⁹. Subsequent events reveal that the Bagratuni king not only had the authority to bestow titles, he could also remove them. In 894, during the reign of Smbat I, Ašot Arcruni traveled to Partaw and petitioned the *ostikan* for support for an independent Vaspurakan. Furious at this betrayal, Smbat granted Vaspurakan to the regent⁶⁰. Šapuh, Smbat's brother, came to Vaspurakan and formally appointed the regent "lord of the principality of Vaspurakan," thereby transferring the title from Ašot Arcruni in a ceremony that is not specified in the texts⁶¹. After the Arcruni brothers successfully engineered the assassination of their regent, Smbat I "had gifts and honors taken to Ašot," recognizing the *fait accompli* and reinstating Ašot as prince of Vaspurakan. To ensure Arcruni loyalty Smbat then raised Gagik Arcruni to the rank of general and also raised Gurgēn, the youngest Arcruni brother, to the rank of *marzpan*⁶². In his account of Gagik's appointment T'ovma provides evidence that the while the ceremonies accorded to *naxarars* by the Bagratuni emulated those of the caliphate, at least some of the resultant privileges were appropriated

⁵⁷ T'OVMA ARCRUNI, 291.

⁵⁸ ID., 295.

⁵⁹ According to T'ovma, Ašot was nine, Gagik seven, and Gurgēn five years old in 887, the year of their father's death. T'OVMA ARCRUNI, 292.

⁶⁰ T'OVMA ARCRUNI, 296-97. The Arcruni princes were imprisoned in the resultant conflict. Smbat granted Vaspurakan jointly to the regent Gagik Apumruan and to the prince of Anjewac'ik', but the latter died shortly after he assisted Apumruan in the imprisonment of the Arcruni princes.

⁶¹ T'OVMA ARCRUNI, 298. T'ovma Arcruni is the only historian to add the detail that Šapuh also married his daughter to Gagik Apumruan, thus sealing the Bagratuni alliance with Vaspurakan.

⁶² T'OVMA ARCRUNI, 291-301.

from Byzantium. As a general, Gagik had the right to carry before him “according to the custom of the Byzantine emperors” banners inscribed with the cross⁶³.

The Anonymous Continuator also describes Ašot Arcruni’s re-instatement to princely status. Writing after Gagik Arcruni’s kingship was firmly established, he omits all reference to the Bagratuni and maintains that it was Gagik who “gave [the] ring into Ašot’s hands, and made him master of his own inheritance with the dignity of prince.”⁶⁴ The Anonymous thus transfers a specifically royal prerogative from the Bagratuni to Gagik. This not only denies Bagratuni authority, it also manufactures early evidence of what the Arcruni historians present as Gagik’s preordained right to royal status.

As described by the contemporary historians, Bagratuni ceremonial recognitions of Armenian *naxarar* and Georgian kings were purely secular in nature. For the Georgian recognitions this undoubtedly reflects, on one level, the division between the Armenian and Georgian churches; while the Armenia church remained autonomous the Georgian church rejoined eastern orthodoxy in the seventh century⁶⁵. This division does not, of course, explain the absence of religious symbolism in Bagratuni recognitions of *naxarar*. This absence, I suggest, is tied to the benefits a restricted use of the Armenian ceremonial granted the Bagratuni. Limiting religious ceremonial to Bagratuni investitures increased the potency of its symbolic message. This restriction ensured that the pious validation accorded by such investiture was only attainable by, and associated with, the Bagratuni kings.

Bagratuni rule over a unified Armenia was brief, ending in 908 with the investiture of Gagik Arcruni as king of Vaspurakan. Given the disparate ties of patronage that bound T’ovma Arcruni and Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc’i, it is not surprising that they provide very different

⁶³ That such insignia had entered Armenia through Byzantine usage is evident from the account, by T’ovma Arcruni, of Gagik’s kinsman Gurgēn, who was invited to the imperial court by the emperor Michael III (r. 842-67) that he might bestow upon Gurgēn, “the great honor of the consulate and decorate him with the insignia of the cross.” T’OVMA ARCRUNI, 267. Gurgēn was seized and sent to Samarra before this could take place.

⁶⁴ T’OVMA ARCRUNI, 335. The historian does relate that Ašot had earlier been given the title of prince, but he omits any Bagratuni role, stating merely that Ašot “was confirmed on his father’s throne.” Ibid., 332. The bestowal of a ring in such ceremonies is not attested in any other medieval Armenian ceremony; it is however known to be a component of ceremonies accorded to Aršakuni princes. See above, note 36.

⁶⁵ For the early evolution of the Armenian church, including its division from the Georgian church see GARSOĪAN, 1999.

accounts of Gagik's investiture. According to Yovhannēs, in 907/08 Gagik went to the *ostikan's* palace in Partaw. There he was presented with "a royal crown, as well as honors and gifts befitting royalty." The *kat'otikos'* low opinion of this event is evident in his remark that when Gagik returned to Vaspurakan he was "bearing something like a crown."⁶⁶ While there can be no doubt that this disapproval reflects the *kat'otikos'* current allegiance to the Bagratuni king and his despair at the fragmentation of Armenia, it also confirms that a second investiture, performed by the *kat'otikos*, was indispensable for the declaration of legitimate Armenian kingship. In particular, the indelible phrase "something like a crown" suggests that the trappings of royal power, such as a crown, imbued the wearer with legitimacy only when bestowed by the proper hands. As we have seen, the proper hands were those of the *kat'otikos*.

The Anonymous Continuator's description of Gagik's elevation is, not surprisingly, much more flattering. According to this account the *ostikan* placed on Gagik's head "a crown of pure gold, artfully made and set with pearls and valuable precious stones, which I am unable to describe. He clothed him in a robe embroidered with gold, a girdle and sword shining with golden ornament."⁶⁷ Gagik was then seated upon a splendidly accoutered horse, and soldiers in full armor flanked the newly-crowned king while the sound of drums, trumpets, horns, flutes, lyres and harps shook the camp of the caliphal army⁶⁸.

This description clearly reveals that Gagik was invested as king in an Abbasid ceremonial that paralleled those accorded to the Bagratuni kings of Armenia. Yet however splendid, Gagik's investiture was set apart from Bagratuni investitures by its lack of religious symbolism — a lack that did not escape the notice of the contemporary historians. Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i notes repeatedly that Gagik received his crown *from the hands* of the Islamic governor, effectively contrasting

⁶⁶ YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 162-3. The *kat'otikos* also notes that Yusuf, scheming to dissolve the unanimity between Smbat and Gagik, did not immediately reveal the fact of Gagik's kingship, and that "after a few months," in 908, Gagik returned to Partaw and was "once again crowned by Yusuf." Ibid., 164.

⁶⁷ T'OVMA ARCRUNI, 347-48.

⁶⁸ T'OVMA ARCRUNI, 347-48. This version also suggests a different chronology from that presented by the *kat'otikos*. According to the Anonymous, Gagik was crowned only after the *ostikan* had captured and imprisoned Smbat I in 913. No mention is made of Gagik's role in Smbat's capture. According to the text it was Smbat's imprisonment which left Armenia in need of a king. This chronological manipulation allowed the historian to present Gagik's elevation as necessary for the preservation of the country, and avoided his presentation as a usurper.

the agent of Gagik's investiture with the participation of the *kat'otikos* in Bagratuni ceremonial⁶⁹. Even the Anonymous Continuator, the most enthusiastic of Gagik's chroniclers, was unable to conceal the flaw in his patron's investiture and took poetic license to remedy the problem. After describing the ceremony he states "I do not hesitate to say that his anointing was invisibly performed by the Holy Spirit, according to the apostles' saying: There is no authority save from God; and what is, has been established by God."⁷⁰

It is not possible to discuss in these pages Gagik's subsequent collusion with the *ostikan* against Smbat I, his uncle and former king, or Yusuf's murder of Smbat in 914. It must suffice to note that Bagratuni rule was fragmented following Smbat's death⁷¹. Yusuf refused to recognize the status of Ašot II, Smbat's son and heir, and Ašot's ensuing struggle to claim his rightful title demonstrates the *ostikan's* increasing power⁷². The recognition of a Bagratuni king of Armenia no longer depended upon ancestral lineage or the support of the *naxarar* or even the caliph; the determining factor was instead the *ostikan's* support. It is also clear that the *kat'otikos* could not independently invest a king without such support.

Unable to secure the royal title from Yusuf, Ašot II turned elsewhere for recognition of his status. In 914 he was acclaimed king of Armenia by Gurgēn, the Georgian duke of Tayk' in a ceremony that is unfortunately not described⁷³. This recognition guaranteed Ašot II military assistance and provided him with a base in Georgia from which he could conduct raids into Armenian territory. It did not, however, advance his claim to kingship within Armenia. The *ostikan's* continued pursuit of Ašot ravaged the country and the situation was further destabilized by *naxarar* anxious to exploit the crisis to their own advantage. In despair, the *kat'otikos* sent a letter to the Byzantine patriarch Nikolas Mystikos appealing for aid. The court dispatched an envoy with an imperial invitation for both the *kat'otikos* and Ašot II. The *kat'otikos* accepted on Ašot's behalf but he himself demurred, "thinking that there might be

⁶⁹ YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 163, 164, 208.

⁷⁰ T'OVMA ARCRUNI, 348. This also confirms that the importance of the *kat'otikos'* role in the investiture of Armenian kings, as conveyed in the *History of Armenia*, does not simply reflect the identity of the author.

⁷¹ The *ostikan* was Yusuf n. Abu' l Sadj (901-928/29), brother of the preceding *ostikan* Afshin. For the effect of these events on Arcruni royal art see JONES, 2001.

⁷² The definitive work on the reign of Ašot II remains that by ADONTZ, 1965, 265-83.

⁷³ YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 179, 294 N 17.

people who might look askance at my going there and assume that I sought communion with the Chalcedonians.”⁷⁴

In 915 Ašot II traveled to the Byzantine capital where he was received with great pomp by the empress Zoë, regent (914-16) for her young son Constantine VII Porphyrogenitos⁷⁵. Ašot was granted the title *archōn tōn archōnton*, which as we have seen was also previously accorded to his father and grandfather. He was dressed in purple garments and given “valuable gold-embroidered robes, byssus with golden borders, and a girdle studded with gems for his waist.” He was also presented with armored horses,” as well as many cups, and utensils, and many gold and silver wares.”⁷⁶ Ašot remained in Constantinople for ten months enjoying the hospitality of the imperial court and then returned to Armenia accompanied by a contingent of Byzantine soldiers⁷⁷. During the journey he received news that Yusuf had crowned his cousin, Ašot *sparapet*, king of Armenia. Yovhannēs’ description of the ceremony accorded to Ašot *sparapet*, known as Ašot the anti-king, reveals it to be an abbreviated version of the Abbasid ceremonial discussed above. The *ostikan* “crowned the *sparapet* of Armenia as king, and gird up his loins with a sword.”⁷⁸ There were now three claimants to the royal title: Ašot II, Ašot the anti-king, and Gagik Arcruni, king of Vaspurakan⁷⁹.

Subsequent events reveal that Ašot II’s Byzantine recognition, while certainly prestigious, did not noticeably advance his claim to kingship within Armenia. Ašot could not gain the Bagratuni title or regain lost Bagratuni lands by waging war against Gagik Arcruni, and so turned his attention to defeating his cousin the anti-king. The *kat’otikos*’ account of this civil war makes it clear that the struggle was no longer one of official recognition; he is careful to note that the status of both contenders had been legitimized by their ceremonial investitures. However, he is

⁷⁴ YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC’I, 198.

⁷⁵ The date of Ašot II’s imperial visit has been much contested; the arguments are summarized in RUNCIMAN, 1929, 249-52. I follow the chronology proposed by ADONTZ, 1965, 265-66.

⁷⁶ YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC’I, 198. The text specifies that the emperor accorded Ašot the honors, but given Constantine’s age (he was ten at the time) it is probable that Zoë or perhaps some imperial official acted in his stead.

⁷⁷ YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC’I, 202; ADONTZ, 1965, 276.

⁷⁸ YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC’I, 202. Ašot *sparapet* was the son of Smbat I’s brother Šapuh. The *ostikan* ensured his loyalty by taking his wife and mother hostage. The investiture took place in the city of Duin, which was at this time the *ostikan*’s residence in Armenia.

⁷⁹ Ašot *sparapet* was the paternal cousin of Ašot II. Gagik Arcruni was Ašot II’s maternal cousin.

equally careful to withhold the royal title when discussing them, repeatedly referring to “Ašot *sparapet*” and “Ašot son of king Smbat.” It is only after they agree to accept his terms of peace that he designates Ašot II as king⁸⁰.

This peace was short-lived. Over the next two years (915/16-918) each Bagratuni claimant sought to capture disputed territory and to ally the more powerful Armenian princely houses to their cause⁸¹. Yusuf was content to let this so-called ‘war of the two Ašots’ rage unchecked, as the resultant disunity prevented any possibility of Armenian resistance to his increasing control of the country. Yusuf’s ambition to establish independent rule over Armenia had been apparent since 911/12, when, taking advantage of the court’s preoccupation with the Fatimid uprising, he stopped forwarding taxes to the caliph. In 916/17 he was joined by the emir of Shirvan, and this alliance brought swift reprisals. Caliphal troops first enforced a reinstatement of taxation, with penalties, from the emir. They then turned toward Partaw and Armenia, bringing with them a new *ostikan* intended to replace Yusuf. In 918, on the eve of caliphal attack, Yusuf abruptly recapitulated and agreed to grant royal status to Ašot II. While Yovhannēs is silent on the matter, Nikolas Adontz has argued convincingly that Ašot achieved the royal title by agreeing to ally his forces with Yusuf’s against the caliph’s army and the new *ostikan*⁸².

According to the *kat’olikos*, Ašot II’s investiture occurred in conjunction with the previously-planned celebration of his marriage, undoubtedly because of the suddenness of the *ostikan*’s reversal. Yusuf did not come to Armenia, as had been the practice for the declaration of the first two Bagratuni kings. He instead sent an envoy to present Ašot II with “a royal crown and valuable ornaments for robes, both beautiful and becoming,” as well as horses, weapons, armor, and a detachment of cavalry⁸³. It is not possible to tell from this description just what degree of

⁸⁰ YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC’I, 201-202. As both claimants, he tells us, “had been invested with the royal honor, they turned against one another in spiteful grudge and jealousy.” It is not clear whether the *kat’olikos* is referring to Ašot II’s Georgian or Byzantine recognition.

⁸¹ YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC’I, 202. See above, n. 56 for Ašot II’s investiture of two princes of Siwnik’.

⁸² According to ADONTZ, 1965, 282, this cooperation with his father’s murderer is why so few *naxarar* rallied to Ašot’s side at this time, including his usually supportive brother Abas, and also explains why the caliph chose this moment to send a royal crown to Gagik Arcruni.

⁸³ YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC’I, 205. Given the historical context of Yusuf’s rebellion it is significant that *kat’olikos* does not mention the caliph and does not present the *ostikan* as his representative.

ceremony was accorded to Ašot by the *ostikan's* envoy — whether there was a formal investiture or merely a presentation of regalia and gifts. Yet regardless of the manner in which Ašot acquired the crown it is certain that it signaled the support of the *ostikan*, a support more forcefully expressed by the Islamic cavalry.

The Abbasid ceremony — however abbreviated — was followed by the celebration of his marriage. Ašot was then invested by the *kat'otikos* with “the crown that the *ostikan* had dispatched.”⁸⁴ To my knowledge this is the only text that specifically documents the *kat'otikos* investing a Bagratuni king with an Islamic crown⁸⁵. This use confirms that the crown's symbolic importance as a visible sign of the *ostikan's* support was secondary to the symbolism embodied by the Armenian ceremonial, in which the *kat'otikos* validated the king's pious worthiness. Like the double investiture accorded to the first two Bagratuni kings of Armenia, Ašot II's investiture, however hastily planned, emphasized his pious persona over his temporal power.

Ašot the anti-king continued to claim the royal title until his death in 936, but his influence was increasingly marginal after Ašot II's investiture. Gagik Arcruni's claim to legitimate royal status was also questionable in the early years of his reign; the *kat'otikos* records his second investiture by Yusuf only months after his first recognition⁸⁶. The Anonymous Continuator omits this second crowning, perhaps precisely because it underscores the tenuous nature of Gagik's early claim to kingship. However, in 919 Gagik received caliphal recognition. By that time Yusuf's rebellion had resulted in his imprisonment in Samarra and in the installation of a new *ostikan*. According to the *kat'otikos* the new governor, Subuk, “placed on the head of king Gagik the crown he had brought with him” from the royal

⁸⁴ YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 205. It is interesting that there was no gift of robes; it is unclear whether this reflects their relative lack of importance, the hasty preparations for the ceremony, or the possibility that the *ostikan's* presence was required for investiture of robes. It will be remembered from the preceding pages that robes are not mentioned in the description of Ašot I's investiture.

⁸⁵ It is possible that Armenian-produced crowns were used in the Armenian investitures of Ašot I and Smbat I; there is no reason why Armenian goldsmiths would not be capable of producing suitable crowns. However, there is no mention of any such Armenian-produced regalia. The only reference to a non-Islamic crown in the possession of a Bagratuni king comes in thirteenth-century Armenian accounts of a crown sent to Ašot I by Basil I, which is discussed below. The texts are more ambiguous concerning the use of Islamic robes in the Armenian investiture ceremony. In Yovhannēs' description of Smbat I's investiture it is not clear whether the robes “wrought with gold” presented by the *ostikan* were the same as the “gold-embroidered robes covered with expressive designs” with which the *kat'otikos* invested Smbat. YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 132.

⁸⁶ YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 164.

court, and bestowed upon him “generous gifts.”⁸⁷ The *kat’otikos*’ words imply that a formal presentation took place in which the new Abbasid governor recognized Gagik’s status as king of Vaspurakan. The Anonymous Continuator also records this event, and it is clear from his account that the caliph’s gifts accorded Gagik a higher degree of legitimacy and surpassed the honor conferred by his earlier investiture at the hands of the *ostikan*. The Anonymous first extols the great honor accorded to Gagik — conveniently bypassing the precedent of the first two Bagratuni kings of Armenia, who, as we have seen, were similarly recognized by the caliph. He also refashions Gagik’s ancestral heritage into something more royal than the facts admit. “For me this is prodigious to relate, this for me is amazing to hear; it far surpasses my own history and those of others; no one has ever heard tell of it or seen it, to be able to reveal that anyone was honored by the [caliph’s] court with the dignity of wearing a crown, especially a Christian and orthodox believer and son of a king, the hereditary and legitimate ruler of Armenia.”⁸⁸

Yusuf was released and reinstated as *ostikan* in 922. According to the Anonymous Continuator “he sent a crown and splendid garments to the king of Armenia Gagik to confirm the land of Armenia in his possession.”⁸⁹ But Gagik had not received investiture from the *kat’otikos*, and so the Anonymous again resorts to rhetorical embellishment to provide his king with pious validation. “I do not reckon it too audacious to repeat a second time that the tyrant was forced to do this by the will and command of the All-Highest and Lord of all.”⁹⁰ Gagik was never invested by the *kat’otikos*. He achieved Byzantine recognition in 924/25, when the court transferred the title *archōn tōn archontōn* from the Bagratuni king. The emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitos subsequently recognized both the Arcruni and Bagratuni kings as *archōn tōn archōnton*, placing them as equals above all other Armenian rulers⁹¹.

⁸⁷ T’OVMA ARCRUNI, 348-49; YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC’I, 163, 164, 208.

⁸⁸ T’OVMA ARCRUNI, 348. Gagik’s father was a prince, and not a king. His mother was the daughter of Ašot I. It is doubtful that the Anonymous is referring, however obliquely, to Gagik’s maternal grandfather; he is rather inflating Gagik’s lineage and therefore his right to royal status.

⁸⁹ T’OVMA ARCRUNI, 349.

⁹⁰ T’OVMA ARCRUNI, 348.

⁹¹ At some point in the 920’s, most likely after the death of Ašot II, the imperial court transferred the title *archōn tōn archontōn* from the Bagratunis and bestowed it upon Gagik Arcruni. It was restored to the Bagratunis following Gagik’s death, but Byzantine sources continue to refer to the Arcruni kings as *archōn tōn archontōn Basparakan* (Vaspurakan). CONSTANTINE VII PORPHYROGENITOS, 1829-30, 687; RUNCIMAN, 159-60; TOUMANOFF, 1965, 107 n. 165, 205 n. 200.

Until his death Gagik was the most powerful of the Armenian kings, but he could not compete with the pious legitimacy enjoyed by the Bagratuni kings of Armenia, conferred upon them in a uniquely Armenian investiture ceremony.

We have seen that while contemporary historians describe additional crowns and robes sent to Smbat I by the caliph and the *ostikan*, there is no mention of supplementary investitures associated with these gifts. It is only during the reign of Ašot II that we find evidence of additional, formal affirmation by the caliphate of a Bagratuni king. According to the *kat'olikos*, after the *ostikan* Yusuf was imprisoned and replaced by Subuk in 921 the latter executed a peace treaty with Ašot II, granting him the title *šahanšah* (king of kings). The text makes no mention of any coronation or investiture. *Šahanšah* is an Iranian title, and as it was not granted to previous Bagratuni kings it seems to have been resurrected specifically to acknowledge Ašot II's pre-eminence over Gagik Arcruni and Ašot the anti-king⁹².

The writings of Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i and T'ovma Arcruni demonstrate that ceremonial was a primary tool of Bagratuni propaganda, facilitating their reinvention as pious rulers. During the reigns of Ašot I and Smbat I the emphasis placed on the Bagratuni king's piety through royal ceremonial burnished the family's newly-reformed pious reputation. After Smbat I's death at the hands of the *ostikan* this emphasis exploited what was suddenly their primary strength, as Bagratuni spiritual authority soared to unparalleled heights following the king's martyrdom, the miraculous events associated with the site of his death, and his subsequent canonization⁹³. This emphasis on piety also concealed the relative weakness of the Bagratuni kings Ašot II and Abas, whose temporal power was secondary to that of Gagik Arcruni⁹⁴. The most powerful symbol of Bagratuni rulership was their investiture by the

⁹² YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 212. For the derivation of the title *šahanšah* see *ibid.*, 303-04, n. 5.

⁹³ A divine light was seen at the site where Smbat's corpse had been crucified and set on display, and, as attested to by the *kat'olikos*, miraculous cures were effected by the soil that had been saturated with the king's blood. YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 177. The presence of such a light is a standard *topos* of saintliness in Armenian historical writing. YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 89 describes a similar light hovering by the coffin of St. Maštoc'. This is repeated by VARDAN AREWELC'I, 169; T'OVMA ARCUNI, 140. See *ibid.*, 208 n. 1 for this phenomenon in the earlier writings of Elišē and Łazar P'arpec'i.

⁹⁴ The date of Gagik's death is given as 943-44 by STEP'ANOS TARŌNEC'I, 168. Gagik was certainly alive in 940, when he is recorded as swearing an oath of vassalage to the Hamdanid emir Sayf al-Dawla, who presented him with "great honors." TER-GHEWONDYAN, 1976, 84-85.

kat'otikos, by which the king's pious worthiness was validated and displayed. This Armenian ceremonial remained a paradigm which could not be copied and for which there existed no substitute⁹⁵. This is, I suggest, a key factor in the subsequent development of Bagratuni ceremonial.

Bagratuni ceremonial 928-1045

Accounts of the ceremonial investiture of Bagratuni kings following Ašot II are sparse, for with the end of the tenth-century histories we come also to the end of detailed contemporary descriptions of such events. Historians writing in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries do provide limited information, and while these later accounts must be used with care they suggest a relatively linear evolution in Bagratuni investiture⁹⁶. Of the elevation of Abas, Ašot II's brother, in 928 we know only that his succession was determined by an assembly of *naxarar* headed by Gagik Arcruni⁹⁷. This emulates the process which brought Ašot I to the throne and therefore suggests a similar emulation of Ašot's double investiture ceremony, as does the fact that the *ostikan* Yusuf (d. 929) was still in power at the time.

The investiture of Abas's son, Ašot III, is described by the twelfth-century historian Matthew of Edessa (Matt'ēos Urhayec'i), who relates that while Ašot III succeeded his father in 952/53 he did not receive formal investiture until 961⁹⁸. While Matthew does not explain this nine-year gap, it was in 961 that the *kat'otikos* Anania Mokac'i moved the *kat'otikosate* to Argina, near the newly-built Bagratuni capital of Ani. For the previous thirty-six years the *kat'otikosate* had been located in Vaspurakan, and the three *kathotikoi* who served during that time were members of the Arcruni family. The *kat'otikos* Mokac'i's first recorded

⁹⁵ STEP'ANOS ŌRBELEAN, 173, indicates that the bishop of Siwnik' anointed the Bagratuni princes of Siwnik' as early as the third quarter of the tenth century. If this is true and not an imposition of twelfth-century practices on to those of the tenth century, this emulation of the Armenian investiture ceremony of the senior branch of the family attests to its prestige. I am inclined, however, to suspect Ōrbelean on this matter; see the following note.

⁹⁶ An example is STEP'ANOS ŌRBELEAN's account of the coronation of Ašot I, which is reconfigured to resemble late Bagratuni investitures. Ōrbelean states that Ašot I received unction from the *kat'otikos* and does not mention his ceremonial recognition by the *ostikan*. STEP'ANOS ŌRBELEAN, 107.

⁹⁷ GROUSSET, 464-65.

⁹⁸ MATTHEW OF EDESSA, 1993, 20. Ašot III "had not yet occupied the royal throne of Armenia and the crown had not been placed upon his head." Matthew wrote in the first decades of the twelfth century; his contribution to the book ends c. 1136.

act after the 961 relocation is his investiture of Ašot III — a testament to the symbolic significance of this ceremony. In this context the timing of Ašot III's investiture seems engineered to highlight the piety of the king and to erase the memory of the previous Arcruni patronage of the *kat'otikosate*. It also raises the question of whether, during 924-61, the *kat'otikos'* participation in the investiture of a Bagratuni king was dependent upon the permission of the Arcruni king.

In his description Matthew also notes that Ašot III “was anointed king as his ancestors had been anointed.”⁹⁹ Does this reveal a procedural change in the royal ceremonial? Anointment is mentioned only once in the surviving accounts of the investitures of the first three Bagratuni kings. According to Yovhannēs his predecessor conferred on Ašot I “the divine benediction of spiritual blessings *instead* of the anointment with the chrism.”¹⁰⁰ While this suggests that anointment was a standard component of the Armenian investiture ceremony, the *kat'otikos* does not mention it in connection with the coronations of Smbat I or Ašot II¹⁰¹.

For confirmation of anointment as a standard element of Bagratuni ceremonial during the tenth century we must turn, rather surprisingly, to the most enthusiastic panegyrist of the Arcruni house, the Anonymous Continuator. As we have seen, the Anonymous takes considerable literary license to remedy the lack of a religious ceremony in Gagik Arcruni's 908 investiture. After describing Gagik's coronation by the *ostikan* he suggests an addendum, an anointment “invisibly performed by the Holy Spirit.”¹⁰² This confirms the essential role anointment played in the establishment of legitimate royal power, and verifies that the tenth-century Bagratuni kings did receive ceremonial anointment. The Anonymous' account also allows us to accept Matthew of Edessa's description of Ašot III's investiture as evidence of the continuation of the Armenian ceremonial into the second half of the tenth century.

⁹⁹ MATTHEW OF EDESSA, 20-21.

¹⁰⁰ YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 128. Emphasis added. Maksoudian suggests that Ašot was not anointed because his ceremony fell on a Wednesday, a day of fasting; *ibid.*, 273, nt. 4-6.

¹⁰¹ YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 132. He states only that Smbat I “received the spiritual blessings,” language that echoes that used for the elevation of Ašot I and which suggests that Smbat was not anointed. As we have seen above, the *kat'otikos'* account of Ašot II's elevation to kingship is even less descriptive, noting only that the new king was invested “with the crown the *ostikan* had dispatched.” The absence of any specific reference to anointment is particularly odd in relation to Smbat's investiture, at which John the Historian presided, and demonstrates the pitfalls of relying on a single text.

¹⁰² T'OVMA ARCRUNI, 348.

It is possible that the importance of the ceremonial anointment of Bagratuni kings is linked with their claim of descent from David. This claim first appears in the *History* of Yovhannēs Drasxanakerc’i, but it was also known to Constantine VII Porphyrogenitos, suggesting that it was formulated in the late ninth or early tenth century¹⁰³. The Bagratuni’s Davidic lineage was thus apparently promoted when they first achieved royal status — as we have seen, this was the period when they actively sought to bolster their pious reputation. Such an illustrious genealogy would strengthen their claim to kingship by presenting David’s divinely-ordained kingship as a paradigm to which their accession could be favorably compared. It is thus possible to see the Bagratuni claim of Davidic descent and their related ceremonial anointment as responses to the difficulties encountered in restoring a monarchy to Armenia. Both were, I suggest, part of the Bagratuni campaign to reinvent themselves as pious rulers. Once their piety had been firmly established, ceremonial anointment became symbolic of their dynastic pedigree and their legitimate right to rule.

There is no evidence suggesting a similar continued use of the Abbasid ceremony. While Ašot III’s investiture undoubtedly validated his temporal powers, he did not receive the Islamic ceremonial accorded to his royal predecessors. Following his anointment by the *kat’olikos* Ašot reviewed the assembled Armenian troops and received gifts from Caucasian Albanian, Byzantine, Georgian, Iranian, and Turkish dignitaries. While crowns and robes may have been among these gifts, Matthew does not mention any formal investiture ceremony¹⁰⁴. It is clear that by the time of Ašot III — if not earlier — the double investiture accorded to the first three kings of Armenia was no longer practiced. Certainly this reflects the diminishing influence of the Abbasid caliphate and the shift in power away from the *ostikan*. Following Yusuf’s death in 929 and the subsequent fall of the Sadjid emirs of Azerbaijan, no single emirate was powerful enough to substantially influence the election

¹⁰³ YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERC’I, 40, 73; CONSTANTINE VII PORPHYROGENITOS, 1967, ch. 45. This claim is not known to Movsēs Xorenac’i, providing a *terminus ad quem* of the late eighth or early ninth century, according to modern scholarship. See TOUMANOFF, 1963, 328-29; MARKWART, 1961, 391. For the problematic dating of Xorenac’i, with bibliography, see the introduction by R. Thomson in MOVSEŠ KHORENATS’I. The claim of Davidic descent replaced the Bagratuni’s previous claim of descent from Hayk’, mythical primogenitor of Armenia, and, prior to the conversion of Armenia, their descent from the solar god. TOUMANOFF, 1963, 201; “Bagratuni,” *Appendix I*, 362-63 in [PS.] P’AWSTOS BUZAND.

¹⁰⁴ MATTHEW OF EDESSA, 20-21.

of a Bagratuni king. As we shall see, the struggle for power shifted to the competing branches of the surviving Armenian princely houses.

There are no descriptions of the investitures of Ašot III's sons. The eldest, Smbat II, ruled from 977-89 and was then succeeded by his brother Gagik I¹⁰⁵. Gagik also received the title *šahanšah*, which had become hereditary¹⁰⁶. In this later period it served primarily to distinguish the rule of the senior Bagratuni king from those of his royal kinsmen. While the fragmentation of Armenia began in 908 with Gagik Arcruni's investiture as king of Vaspurakan, the greatest blow to unified Bagratuni rule was delivered by Ašot III, who began the practice of awarding royal titles to members of the ruling family. In 961 he pacified his rebellious brother Mušel with the title king of Kars and Vanand, the district northwest of the new capital of Ani. In 964 the prince of Siwnik', Smbat Bagratuni, declared his independence and claimed royal status. By 980 Gurgēn, Ašot III's youngest son, was granted the title king of Tašir-Joraget, to the north of Ani¹⁰⁷.

When Gagik I died in 1017 or 1020 the royal title was contested by his two elder sons. Ašot IV, the younger of the two brothers, was victorious in the civil war that followed but according to Matthew of Edessa the succession was ultimately decided by an assembly and bound by oaths administered by the *kat'otikos* Petros¹⁰⁸. Ašot IV was then made king of all "the country outside Ani," while his elder brother Yovhannēs Smbat was given the title king of Ani and the surrounding district of Shirak¹⁰⁹. Ašot IV's son Gagik II was the last Bagratuni king of Armenia. He succeeded his father in 1041 after a struggle with factions supporting his regent. Matthew of Edessa tells us that Gagik was brought to Ani under the protection of the prince Ġregor Pahlawuni and was then anointed king by the *kat'otikos* Petros. In 1043 he traveled to Constantinople at the invitation of the emperor Constantine IX Monomachos. Once there he was kept as a virtual prisoner and was persuaded to

¹⁰⁵ STEP'ANOS TARŌNEC'I, 137, 138.

¹⁰⁶ YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 212, 303-4 n. 5. For the date of Ašot II's recognition as *šahanšah* see ADONTZ, 1965, 278; on page 282, however, he dates the same event to 919! For Ašot III and Gagik I see GROUSSET, 464-65; MATTHEW OF EDESSA, 29, 43, 295

¹⁰⁷ STEP'ANOS TARŌNEC'I, xxi; STEP'ANOS ŌRBELEAN, 172. Gurgēn is given the title king by MATTHEW OF EDESSA, 27, in his description of the assembly of Hark' in 974. With the exception of texts indicating that the Siwnik' investiture featured anointment by the bishop of Siwnik', we have no further details as to the method by which these kings were ceremonially recognized. See above, n. 95, 96.

¹⁰⁸ MATTHEW OF EDESSA, 22-23.

¹⁰⁹ ARISTAKĒS LASTIVERTC'I (writing 1072-87), 1973, 9-10.

exchange his Armenian lands for territory in Cappadocia. The *kat'otikos*, who served as governor of Ani in the king's absence, resisted two subsequent military attacks by the Byzantine army before handing the city over to imperial control in 1045¹¹⁰.

The accounts of the investitures of the later Bagratuni rulers are sketchy at best, but it is clear that those following the rule of Ašot II were much altered from the ceremonial recognition of the first three kings of Armenia. We have seen that the contemporary descriptions of the elevations of Ašot I, Smbat I, and Ašot II each featured a double investiture ceremony. Following Yovhannēs' account of the investiture of Ašot II there is no further record of the formal investiture of a Bagratuni king of Armenia by anyone other than the *kat'otikos*.

Royal Imagery

As with ceremonial, images of medieval rulers served to visually characterize royal power and piety¹¹¹. Unfortunately, royal Armenian imagery of any type is poorly documented for the Bagratuni period. No depictions of Bagratuni rulers or descriptions of lost images survive from the first half of the tenth century. The Bagratuni kings did not mint their own coins, further reducing the possible sources of royal representation¹¹². It therefore at first seems impossible to compare the expression of early Bagratuni kingship as manifest in royal portraits with that promoted by Bagratuni investiture ceremonial. However, Bagratuni portraits do survive from the second half of the tenth century.

In 967 Ašot III and his wife Xosrovanuyš either constructed or rebuilt a church dedicated to the Holy Savior (*Amenap'rkic'*) in the monastery

¹¹⁰ MATTHEW OF EDESSA, 67.

¹¹¹ There are, for instance, multiple surviving examples of Byzantine portraits that depict the emperor receiving his crown from the hand of God. For an ivory panel depicting the emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitos crowned by Christ see GOLDSCHMIDT, WEITZMANN, 1930, no. 35; 35-36. For a manuscript portrait depicting Constantine IX Monomachos crowned by Christ see SPATHARAKIS, 1976, 99-102, fig. 66. For an image of Constantine and his empress, Eudokia, crowned by Christ see *ibid.*, 102-106, fig. 68; for a depiction of John II Komnenos and his eldest son Alexios being crowned by Christ see *ibid.*, 79-83, fig. 46. A manuscript portrait of an imperial family, including the crowning of the emperor by Christ, is discussed in ANDERSON, CANART, WALTER, 1989, 15ff., 55-56. An enamel on the Khakhuli Triptych now in the State Museum of Fine Arts in Tbilisi shows Michael VII Doukas and his Georgian empress, Maria, being crowned by Christ; AMIRANASHVILI, 1964, 93-111.

¹¹² For the mint at Duin, active in the tenth century and controlled by the *ostikan*, see TER GHEWONDYAN, 1976, 77-78. In the absence of Armenian coinage the currency in use was Arab and, to a lesser degree, Byzantine. For Armenian knowledge of Byzantine coins in the eleventh century see below, note 133.



Fig. 1 — Gurgin and Smbat Bagratuni. East facade, church of the Holy Savior, Sanahin. c.967

of Sanahin, located in the northern district of Tašir-Joraget¹¹³. Portraits of two of their sons are carved in low relief and set in a niche beneath the gable on the east façade (figure 1). An inscription carved on the surrounding frame identifies the left-hand figure as Gurgēn, the youngest son of Ašot III. The inscription identifies the right-hand figure as Smbat and names him as king. This use of the royal title reveals that the inscription was added after 977, when Smbat achieved royal status. When the portraits were erected Smbat was prince and his father Ašot III was the Bagratuni king.

The figures of the two brothers are symmetrically arranged and hold between them a model of the church. They are the same height and exhibit the same posture, with heads turned frontally toward the viewer and bodies shown in profile. The faces are carved with identical, simply delineated features, including long forked beards and conjoined eyebrows. They wear identical tunics with voluminous sleeves. The tunics are carved with deep lines in imitation of flowing drapery but otherwise show no decorative patterns. The figures also wear identical, three-peaked headdresses with pendants and long flaps, or lappets, framing their faces. The pendants are *prependoulia*, an element of Byzantine regalia restricted to members of the imperial family. Lappets were a characteristic feature of the crowns worn by the Armenian Arshakuni kings, as demonstrated by coins of the period¹¹⁴.

Three aspects of the royal portraits at Sanahin are particularly noteworthy: the choice to depict only two of Ašot III's three sons, the identical appearance of the two sculpted figures and the unique headgear. Of these only the headgear has attracted scholarly attention. Two thirteenth-century Armenian accounts relate the presentation of a crown to Ašot I by the Byzantine emperor Basil I, and this crown has been linked to the headgear depicted at Sanahin¹¹⁵. According to the historians Vardan

¹¹³ Today in northern Armenia. For the construction of the medieval monastery see STEP'ANOS TARONNEC'I, lix-ix, 40; SAMUEL ANEC'I, 1979, 436-37; VARDAN AREWELC'I, 189 — but see too 188, where Vardan notes Sanahin was built "during the rule of Abas" by monks expelled from Byzantium.

¹¹⁴ For examples of Arshakuni coinage and bibliography see BEDOUKIAN, 1978, esp. 4-5 for the discussion of the "Armenian tiara." For the crowns of the rulers of Armenia and of Lazica during the post-Arshakuni period see TOUMANOFF, 1963, 135 nt. 235.

¹¹⁵ GROUSSET, 395; DER NERSESSIAN, 1978, 81; CUNEO, ALPAGO-NOVELLO, 13; EVANS, 1997, 485-507. EVANS, 488, suggests that the headgear worn by the princes at Sanahin resembles crowns depicted on coins issued by the emperor Basil I and thus are meant to imitate Byzantine regalia. For illustration of the Byzantine coin in question see SPATHARAKIS, 98, fig. 65. The crowns on the coinage of Basil I do not, in my estimation, resemble the Armenian princes' headgear as they do not feature the same distinctive

Arewelc'i (d. 1271) and Kirakos Ganjakec'i (c. 1200-71), Basil I sent a crown to Ašot I in 885, immediately following the caliph's recognition of Ašot's royal status¹¹⁶. Several factors support the conclusion that this crown is a literary fabrication. As we have seen, Basil did honor Ašot with the title *archōn tōn archontōn* after the latter's Abbasid investiture. However, neither Yovhannēs nor his contemporary T'ovma Arcruni mentions a crown as part of the imperial gifts sent to Ašot¹¹⁷. In fact, there is no textual reference to this gift until the second half of the thirteenth century, and there is no mention in the Armenian histories of any other Bagratuni king receiving a crown from a Byzantine emperor¹¹⁸. As discussed above, Ašot's grandson, Ašot II, did travel to Constantinople and was honored by the imperial court. While there he received many splendid gifts, but a crown was not among them.

Further evidence against Ašot I's Byzantine crown can be marshaled from the Byzantine point of view. Cyril Toumanoff noted that the word *basileus* was not used to refer to foreign rulers after the seventh century, when it became the official Byzantine translation of *imperator*¹¹⁹. Impe-

three-pointed profile. And, to my knowledge, no Byzantine crown sports lappets, as are found at Sanahin. The hats worn by the princes at Sanahin most closely resemble a parchment miter, now in Belgium, which was commissioned c. 1215 by the crusader Jacques de Vitry for his personal use. Illustrated in COURTOY, 1953, 100-102. I thank Jaroslav Folda for this reference. Until further research establishes a link between the headgear at Sanahin and de Vitry's miter, their relation — if any — remains unclear.

¹¹⁶ VARDAN AREWELC'I, 187; KIRAKOS GANJAKEC'I, 1986, 72.

¹¹⁷ According to the *kat'otikos*, "Basil, the great emperor of the Greeks, also offered terms of peace — which were in no way trivial, harmony and friendship to our king Ašot, whom he addressed as 'beloved son', and he communicated this to all the kingdoms in his dominion." YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I, 129. T'ovma Arcruni ignores virtually all aspects of Ašot's succession to the royal title; see T'OVMA ARCRUNI, 291 and nt. 9.

¹¹⁸ Another tale, first related by Vardan, also involves Ašot I, Basil I, and a crown, but here Ašot is the presenter. This story originates with the vision of the fourth-century Armenian saint Sahak that the Aršakuni line will be restored. According to ADONTZ, 1965, 85-86, this vision was exploited by the Byzantine court in the tenth century, after the death of Basil I. Here Basil's Aršakuni ancestry identifies him as the fulfillment of the divine prophecy and thus both justifies and excuses his bloody path to imperial power. See THEOPHANOS CONTINUATOS, 141,17. In turn, Armenian writers exploited the advantages of this tale to Armenia. Vardan tells us that Basil, made aware of his Aršakuni ancestry by an Armenian bishop of Tarōn, desired to fully emulate the Aršakuni coronation ritual. He therefore sent an ambassador to the Armenian court to request a crown from king Ašot I, and also requested that Ašot re-create the ancestral Bagratuni role of coronant to the Aršakuni kings by participating in Basil's coronation. See VARDAN AREWELC'I, 186. I hope to pursue more fully these tales and their appearance after the fall of Constantinople in 1204. It is significant, I suggest, that the empire previously feared for its eastward expansions and its claim of primacy over the Armenian Church was greatly weakened at the time Vardan and Kirakos were composing their histories.

¹¹⁹ TOUMANOFF, 1965, 107 n.165. For use of the term *basileus* in the early Byzantine period see CHRYSOS, 1978, 29-75.

rial policy initiated by Basil I codified this view of Byzantine hegemony. Basil saw the imperial role as that of *kosmokrator*, recognizing all other rulers as inferior to and dependent upon the emperor¹²⁰. The continued observance of this policy is reflected in tenth-century Byzantine sources that never assign Ašot I a royal title but consistently refer to him as *archōn tōn archontōn* — a Greek translation of the Armenian *išxanac' išxan*, rendered presiding prince or prince of princes¹²¹. Constantine VII Porphyrogenitos makes clear his observance of this policy in *De Administrando Imperio*, discussing how to deflect foreign requests for imperial regalia¹²². Most significantly, there is no Byzantine documentation attesting to the presentation of imperial crowns to foreign rulers before the twelfth century¹²³. Such presentations were contemporary with Vardan and Kirakos, and this suggests that their reports of the gift of an imperial crown to Ašot I reflect contemporary, rather than tenth century, imperial custom¹²⁴.

I suggest that the accounts of Vardan and Kirakos have unnecessarily complicated the correct interpretation of the royal portraits at Sanahin. The sculptures at Sanahin are not the only Caucasian royal images that include *prependoulia* — nor are they the earliest. *Prependoulia* are also found in a Georgian royal portrait dated to 963-66. The south façade of the cathedral at Oshki (now in modern Turkey), displays the sculpted

¹²⁰ Basil's policy is best illustrated in his dealings with western rulers, most notably the "emperor" Lewis II, see JENKINS, 1987, 185-89 and bibliography.

¹²¹ Gy. Moravcsik and R.J.H. Jenkins render *archōn tōn archontōn* as prince of princes in their translation of *De Administando Imperio*; see chapters 43, 44.

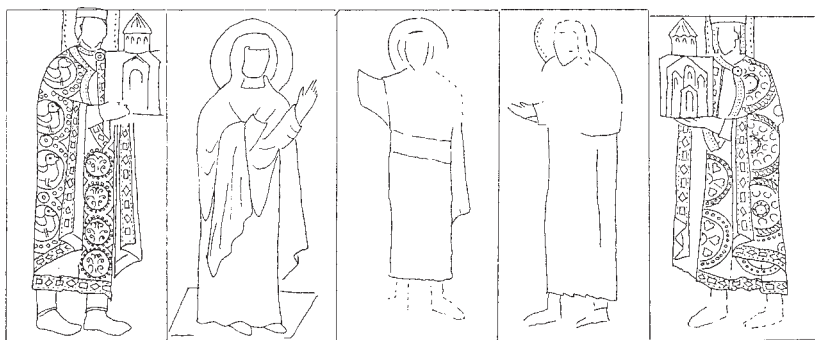
¹²² CONSTANTINE VII PORPHYROGENITOS, 1966, 67ff. Constantine was undoubtedly mindful of the near debacle in 913 when the Bulgarian khan Symeon demanded investiture as *basileus*. What actually happened remains unclear and is still debated; but the texts do agree that Symeon was not crowned with an imperial *stemma* but rather had a patriarchal scarf placed on his head. The literature on this event is best summarized by KARLIN-HAYTER, 1968, 29-39. In 913 Constantine VII was seven, and the recognition of Symeon was overseen by the patriarch Nikolas Mystikos — who, three years later, invited Ašot II to the imperial court.

¹²³ The two surviving examples of Byzantine "crowns" sometimes purported to have been gifts to foreign rulers, the so-called crown of Constantine IX Monomachos and the Hungarian Crown of St. Stephen, both date to the second half of the eleventh century, rendering any further discussion of their original form or function unnecessary in the context of this study, as they post-date both Ašot I and Basil I. For these works see KOVACS, LOVAG, 1980; OIKONOMIDES, 1994, 241-62.

¹²⁴ The presentation of a crown to Levon II, ruler of Cilician Armenia, by Henry VI in 1196 is documented by SMBAT, 1980, 73. This further suggests that Vardan and Kirakos were imposing contemporary practices onto the Bagratuni period. If the thirteenth century accounts are accepted as factual it remains to be explained how, at Sanahin, one imperial *stemma* became two identical crowns, why they feature lappets, and why such lofty regalia is accorded to Bagratuni *princes*.



Fig. 2 — Davit III and Bagrat Bagrationi (far left and right) with Deesis. South facade, Oshki cathedral. 963-66.



images of another pair of princely brothers, Davit III and Bagrat Bagrationi, rulers of Tayk' and members of the Georgian branch of the Bagratuni family (figure 2). They are depicted wearing an impressive assemblage of Byzantine regalia, including *chlamydes*, tunics, and crowns. These portraits provide evidence that elements of Byzantine regalia, including *prependoulia*, were recognized and valued for the symbolic power they conveyed. Yet their appropriation is imprecise. As Antony Eastmond notes, the costumes worn by the Bagrationi brothers are antiquated in comparison to contemporary imperial portraits, which show the emperor in the *loros* rather than the *chlamys*¹²⁵. Furthermore, the Oshki relief does not accurately reflect the brothers' ranking in the Byzantine hierarchy. While Davit, the elder brother, held the relatively minor Byzantine title of *magistros*, it is the younger, untitled brother's crown that features *prependoulia*¹²⁶. Clearly, the message conveyed by imperial regalia could be altered once it was removed from the original Byzantine context. The portraits at Oshki are not intended as statements of imperial status but rather invoke the historic links between the Bagrationi and the imperial court, and employ Byzantine regalia to emphasize the brothers' royal legitimacy.

These Georgian images, when considered together with those at Sanahin, confirm that by the second half of the tenth century *prependoulia* were established in the wider, Caucasian tradition of royal representation. There is, however, no evidence that the *prependoulia* in the Armenian portraits should be read as intentional expressions of Smbat and Gurgēn's rank within the greater Byzantine sphere of influence, as is seen at Oshki. There is no contemporary documentation linking the Bagratuni brothers with the imperial court. It is also significant that, in contrast to the assemblage of imperial regalia depicted at Oshki, the royal images at Sanahin appropriate only one element of Byzantine regalia, the *prependoulia*, and combine this with lappets, regalia associated with Aršakuni royal imagery. The headdresses at Sanahin with their Byzantine and Aršakuni elements are, I suggest, an assemblage of generally recognized royal symbols, and speak in general terms of royal status¹²⁷.

¹²⁵ EASTMOND, 1998, 26-27, 228-30.

¹²⁶ EASTMOND, 1998, 23, 229, indicated that both brothers' crowns have *prependoulia*. This is corrected in EASTMOND, JONES, 2001; despite the damage that both images have suffered it is clear that only Bagrat's crown has *prependoulia*, as the surface on either side of Davit's head is quite smooth.

¹²⁷ As is well known, medieval Armenia was characterized by its appropriation and adaptation of foreign iconography and ideology. The appropriation of Abbasid ceremo-

What is remarkable about the portraits at Sanahin — and what has been overlooked in discussions of the headgear — is that as a whole the figures convey an overwhelming impression of fraternal unity and equality. They are identical in size, form, and dress. This is extraordinary in an age when a primary function of art is the visual expression of hierarchical distinctions of rank. The choice of subjects is equally in need of explanation. Why are only the eldest and youngest sons of Ašot III depicted? Where is Gagik, the middle son? Contemporary events provide the answers and also, I suggest, reveal the primary message of the portraits at Sanahin.

Armenian historians document the succession woes of Ašot III and his son Smbat II. In 961 Ašot III's brother Mušel contested Ašot's right to the throne and, as we have seen, was conciliated with the title king of Kars and Vanand. This occurred six years before the portraits at Sanahin were erected. Mušel's continued refusal to acknowledge Ašot's status and his later attempted coup against his nephew Smbat II demonstrates that he remained a very real threat¹²⁸. He was not alone. Ašot III's middle son, Gagik, was expelled from the court "for suspicion of treachery" following his father's death in 977 and the accession of his elder brother¹²⁹. The absence of any depiction of Gagik at Sanahin suggests that his threat to the designated line of succession preceded Ašot III's death. This is also suggested by a contemporary description of Smbat's accession to the royal title; contrary to normal practice he was invested as king on the day of his father's death, thus preventing any attempts to

nial has been demonstrated in the first section of this paper. For this phenomenon in liturgy see TAFT, 1998, 13-30; for such appropriation in manuscript illumination see MATHEWS, 1994, 54-65, esp. 60-65. A slightly later example of the appropriation of Byzantine imperial iconography is attributed to the younger of the two brothers depicted at Sanahin. Philip Grierson identified Gurgēn I as the ruler named on a bronze follis as Kiurik (Gurgēn) "king of Lori," a title he received by 980. The bronze follis imitates coins minted by John I Tzimisces (969-76) and Basil II (976-1025). The obverse of the coin features a bust of Christ, while the reverse carries a five-line Armenian inscription, "may the Lord aid Kiurik the Korapaḡat (*kuropalates*)." Grierson convincingly argues that Gurgēn, who served as the primary liaison between Ašot III and John Tzimisces when the latter came to Armenia in 974, would have had opportunity to be rewarded for his services with a title such as *kuropalates*. GRIERSON, 1962, 107-112, with bibliography of earlier literature.

¹²⁸ STEP'ANOS TARŌNEC'I, 39, 49, 51.

¹²⁹ VARDAN AREWELC'I, 189. The nature of Vardan's account, which is primarily a compilation from other sources, makes it possible to question some of his assertions, such as the gift of a Byzantine crown to Ašot I, while accepting others. The veracity of his account of the history of the Bagratunis as it relates to Sanahin is bolstered by the fact that he was a monk there for many years and would therefore have had access to histories concerning the monastery.

usurp his claim to the throne¹³⁰. This historical context makes it possible to see in the portraits at Sanahin a message of dynastic unity, motivated by challenges to the order of royal succession. In the context of this message the derivation of the “crowns” assumes less importance; like all other elements of the portraits, the headgear serves to underscore the princes’ dynastic solidarity¹³¹.

The church of the Holy Sign (Surb Nšan) at Haľbat provides supporting evidence for this interpretation. Haľbat, located near Sanahin in Tařir-Joraget, was also built by Xosrovanuyř and it too features portraits of her sons Gurgēn and Smbat (figure 3)¹³². As at Sanahin, the sculpted images of the two brothers are placed high on the east facade within the confines of a rectangular niche beneath the gable. Their figures are again symmetrically arranged within the niche, and they again hold between them a model of their church. The facial features of the two are identical, with long rounded beards, hair indicated by rows of uniform corkscrew curls, and the same conjoined eyebrows found on their portraits at Sanahin. However, at Haľbat the brothers’ relative rank is given clear visual expression, confirming historical accounts that date the portraits to after 977, when Smbat succeeded his father as king of Armenia¹³³.

Smbat’s royal status — and his superior rank vis-à-vis his brother — is most immediately apparent in his costume. He wears an elaborate woven turban while Gurgēn wears a cap-like helmet¹³⁴. While the

¹³⁰ STEP’ANOS TARŌNEC’I, 137.

¹³¹ A sense of fraternal unity similar to that conveyed by the portraits at Sanahin is given textual expression by T’ovma Arcruni. He goes to great lengths to demonstrate the bonds between Gurgēn, Gagik, and Ařot Arcruni after the death of their father, culminating in the rather improbable claim that “each regarded the other [two] as superior to himself, reckoning the dignity of their princely rank to be equally shared.” T’OVMA ARCRUNI, 295. After Ařot’s death he presents the remaining brothers once again coming together “in mutual harmony inspired by affable love for each other with no thoughts of evil. They combined noble intention and generous inspiration, putting aside all thoughts of hostile intent and folly, and embraced each other in their desire for the good and advantageous prosperity and peace of their native land, to which they devoted their diligent care.” Ibid., 313. The Anonymous Continuator does not, it should be noted, go to such lengths, and indeed his descriptions of the accession of Ařot and Gagik Arcruni leave out all references to brotherly respect and instead concentrate on praising Gagik and stressing Gurgēn’s obedience toward his elder brother’s rule; see *ibid.*, 332, 341-42.

¹³² MNATS’AKANIAN, ALPAGO-NOVELLO, 1980, 12.

¹³³ STEP’ANOS TARŌNEC’I, lix, lx.

¹³⁴ Gurgēn’s helmet, while unique in surviving Armenian imagery, bears comparison to late Sasanid helmets known as *spangenhelm*. See SIMPSON, 1996, 87-197, esp. 97, illustrated pl. 2a/b. A contemporary reference to Abbasid “decorated” helmets is cited above, nt. 18.



Fig. 3 — Gurgén and Smbat II Bagratuni. East facade, church of the Holy Sign, Halbat.
After 977.

figures of the two brothers are similarly clothed in undecorated mantles worn over plain tunics and high riding boots strapped at the ankle, Smbat's dress is more lavishly detailed. The sleeves of his mantle are tightly gathered into smooth wide cuffs and his boots feature two straps. In contrast, Gurgēn's sleeves terminate in small, loose folds, and his boots have one strap. The severity of both brothers' dress is relieved only by the voluminous material of their tunic sleeves, which project beyond the cuffs of their mantles and hang down from their extended arms. Even this detail serves to express their relative rank. Smbat's sleeves are large and hang straight down, while Gurgēn's are smaller and bend backward toward his body¹³⁵.

While the costumes are the most immediate indicators of rank, Smbat's superior status is also communicated in other ways. He is placed to the viewer's right. If a figure — such as that of Christ, for example — is imagined accepting the church, Smbat would be on Christ's favored side, at his right hand¹³⁶. Smbat is also given a greater degree of frontality than the figure of his brother, and he is placed closer to the model of the church. Smbat's left arm, which grasps the model, is bent at a ninety-degree angle and held close to his body, while Gurgēn's corresponding arm (his right) is almost fully extended. Finally, both figures are carved to the same height, filling the niche, but this seeming equality of stature is illusory, for without his helmet Gurgēn would be the shorter of the two.

Smbat's royal status is thus conveyed by a variety of artistic devices including frontality, scale and preferential placement in addition to the representation of sumptuous costume¹³⁷. A similar use of such visual

¹³⁵ Smbat's tunic sleeves thus seem to emulate the static nature for which the Byzantine emperor was celebrated, and which is a characteristic of imperial portraiture. For a discussion, with bibliography, of *taxis* and *ataxia* see MAGUIRE, 1997, 183-91, esp. 185-87. I know of no parallel use of this wonderfully sophisticated device in any other Caucasian portrait.

¹³⁶ As discussed above, when the inscription was added to the lintel surrounding the niche at Sanahin, Smbat was named as the right-hand figure. As the statues of the two brothers are otherwise indistinguishable from each other this choice must also reflect an established hierarchy of placement, as is seen at Halbat and Alt'amar, and the need to give retro-active pride of placement to the newly royal brother.

¹³⁷ All of these devices are widespread in medieval art. The use of frontality to convey rank has a venerable history with origins in Roman imperial art; it subsequently spread throughout the eastern Mediterranean. MAC CORMACK, 1981, 101, 189-90, 190-92, 203, 214. For examples from the medieval Islamic world see GRABAR, 1954, 185-87; DODDS, 1995, 198-201. Frontality is one of the most recognizable features of Byzantine imperial imagery, see MAGUIRE, 85-87. The similar use of frontality at Halbat should be seen as part of the artistic legacy Armenia shares with Byzantium and not as an emulation

expressions of rank is found in the depiction of two martyred Arcruni princely brothers on the south facade of the church of the Holy Cross at Alt'amar (915-21). The senior brother is granted greater status through the length of his accompanying inscription, a more elaborate costume, the attribute of a martyr's cross and placement to the viewer's right¹³⁸. Halbat, with its forceful expressions of the distinctions of rank, proves the norm in the depiction of medieval royal status and illustrates just how remarkable are the earlier portraits at Sanahin¹³⁹.

When Smbat died in 989/90 his exiled brother was recalled and installed as the Bagratuni king Gagik I (998/90-1017 or 1020)¹⁴⁰. After attaining royal status Gagik founded the church of St. Gregory the Illuminator at Ani. In 1906 a larger than life-sized sculpture depicting Gagik holding a model of his church on his outstretched arms was discovered in the rubble of the church ruins (figure 4). The portrait, which vanished during World War I, was the only known example of medieval Armenian sculpture in the round¹⁴¹. Gagik's royal status was prominently conveyed by a white turban of immense proportions. He wore an undecorated red mantle over a white tunic, and a necklace bearing a large cross rested on his breast. The tunic's sleeves projected beyond those of the mantle and terminated in great swags of fabric, analogous to but larger than those worn by his brothers at Halbat.

of contemporary imperial iconography. The hierarchic use of scale is found in the art of Islam, Byzantium, and Georgia, in addition to Armenian royal imagery, testifying to its dissemination throughout the medieval Mediterranean world. For examples from medieval Islamic art see ETTINGHAUSEN, GRABAR, 1994, 57, fig. 29; 152, fig. 131; 238, fig. 253. For Byzantium MAGUIRE, 183-91. For Georgia see EASTMOND, 1998, 20-26, figs. 12-14. The preferential placement of donor images at Christ's right side is found in contemporary Armenian, Georgian, and Byzantine imagery. For Armenia see the west façade portrait of Gagik Arcruni, who is placed to the right of the figure of Christ in JONES, 2001; JONES, 1994, 104-117. For Georgian examples see EASTMOND, 1998, figs. 8, 10, 12-14. For examples from Byzantium see EVANS, WIXOM, cat nos. 138, 140, 144, 147I.

¹³⁸ Illustrated in DER NERSESSIAN, 1965, figs. 24, 25

¹³⁹ The cathedral at Dadivank', which is dated by inscription to 1214, features the identical portraits of two princely brothers. However, the inscription reveals that these images were erected by Arzu Xatun, mother of the two brothers, after their death to commemorate their memory. See J. M. THIERRY, 1989, 511.

¹⁴⁰ According to Vardan, "Immediately they summoned the exiled Gagik, gave him the crown, and married him to Katramite, daughter of Sahak king of Siwnik'." VARDAN AREWELC'I, 189.

¹⁴¹ N. Marr, the supervising archaeologist, suggested that the sculpture was originally located on the north facade of the church. MARR, 1907, 18-20, figs. 13, 15. See also CUNEO, ALPAGO-NOVELLO, 92-93. In the 1990's a fragment of the statue was found and is now in the archaeological museum in Erzerum, Turkey. I have been unable to obtain a photograph of this small fragment, which consists of the upper left portion of Gagik's chest and left arm.



Fig. 4 — Gagik I Bagratuni. Church of St. Gregory the Illuminator, Ani. After 998/90.
(Whereabouts unknown)



Fig. 5 — King Hezekiah. North facade, church of the Holy Cross, Alt'amar, 915-21.

While the evidence is both quantitatively and chronologically limited, the portraits of Halbat and Ani suggest a standard representation of Bagratuni royal status which features the presentation of church models, turbans as indicators of royal rank, and mantles worn over tunics distinguished by pendant sleeves. It is only the last of these features which is apparently unique to Bagratuni portraits¹⁴². Representations of donors with church models appear in Armenia as early as the sixth century, and their reoccurrence throughout the medieval period confirms that they were an established element in the Armenian representation of aristocratic and royal piety¹⁴³. Contemporary Georgian portraits invariably depict donors with church models and thus attest to a wider, shared tradition of representation¹⁴⁴. Turbans, while more restricted in their chronological occurrence, also indicate status in both Armenian and Georgian art. They signal the royal status of biblical figures carved on the exterior of the palace church of Gagik Arcruni (figure 5)¹⁴⁵. The portrait of the Georgian prince Ašot Kuhki (r. 891-918), now in the Tbilisi Museum, features a large turban¹⁴⁶. Donor portraits in Cappadocia and Istanbul also testify to the Byzantine use of turbans as indicators of status and rank¹⁴⁷. The turbans worn by the Bagratuni kings at Halbat and

¹⁴² To my knowledge the sleeves have formal counterparts only in the depictions of sleeve-dancers of the Islamic courts. However, the latter are always shown unfurled and extended over the hands rather than gathered at the wrists as in the Armenian portraits. I thank Scott Redford for this observation. Baggy sleeves are part of the royal costume on the Spanish-Umayyad Pyxis of al-Mughira, dated to 968, but their form does not duplicate those found in the Bagratuni portraits. See DODDS, 193-97. Gagik I's distinctive spit-curl, which curves on his cheek, is also found in Abbasid, Fatimid, and Hispano-Umayyad paintings. For examples see ETTINGHAUSEN, GRABAR, figs. 107, 143-44, 189, 191. This must reflect the general transmission of style from the Islamic courts to the Armenian; it may also reflect the Armenian use of Islamic, or Islamic-trained, artists.

¹⁴³ The sixth-century example is on a stele found at Agarak. Illustrated in DER MANUELIAN. In his portrait on the west façade of his palace church (built 915-21) Gagik Arcruni proffers a prominent model of his church to the figure of Christ. For this image, and for the development of the Arcruni visual expression of kingship see JONES, 2001, fig. 14.3 and JONES, 1994, esp. 108-110, fig. 10.

¹⁴⁴ EASTMOND, 1998, *passim*.

¹⁴⁵ If J-M. THIERRY, 1988, 543, is correct in identifying the fresco portraits at St. John of Kaputkol as representations of later kings of Vaspurakan, the convention of depicting kings with turbans also continued in Vaspurakan to the eleventh century. Certainly the existing comparanda suggests that, like their late tenth-century counterparts the lost portraits of the earliest Bagratuni kings of Armenia could have featured turbans as a sign of royal rank.

¹⁴⁶ Image in EASTMOND, 1998, 11-12, figs. 2, 3.

¹⁴⁷ The donor depicted with the archangel Michael at Cavusin, which is contemporary with the Bagratuni images, wears a turban; see RODLEY, 1983, 301-339. Two further Cappadocian examples (Carikli and Karabaş Kilisesi) date to the mid eleventh century; see RODLEY, 1985, figs. 38, 153. The fourteenth century portrait of Theodore Metochites in

Ani should not, therefore, be read as foreign elements but rather reflect the thorough assimilation of Islamic modes of dress into the Armenian aristocracy¹⁴⁸.

Perhaps as important are the elements that are *not* found in the surviving portraits of Bagratuni kings: there are no foreign robes or crowns. While it is possible that the robes worn by the figures at Halbat were originally embellished with painted decoration, and that they therefore may have imitated either Islamic or Byzantine embroidered textiles, it should be noted that the dress is not Islamic *in form*, as it is in the royal portraits of Gagik Arcruni, for example, who is depicted on the west facade of his palace church at Alt'amar wearing trousers¹⁴⁹. Nor do we find Bagratuni kings depicted in *chlamydes* or other imperial regalia, as is found at Oshki. A comparison of the sculptures at Halbat and Sanahin suggest that what was acceptable for Bagratuni princely imagery was not acceptable for the representation of Bagratuni kings. Once Smbat attains royal status his portrait no longer features any elements derived from foreign regalia.

The royal Bagratuni portraits of the second half of the tenth century thus visually stress the specifically Armenian nature of Bagratuni kingship, prominently displaying the rulers' piety and eschewing foreign emblems of power. This correlates with the ideology of kingship expressed in the investitures of the first three Bagratuni kings, where the recognition of temporal power symbolized in the Abbasid ceremony or through the gift of an Abbasid crown was secondary to the pious symbolism conveyed through the investiture performed by the *kat'otikos*. This shared ideology, as expressed in both ceremonial and portraiture, allows us to view the Bagratuni portraits from the end of the tenth century as a continuation of an earlier established tradition of Bagratuni royal imagery of which nothing now survives.

Our final royal image dates to the mid-eleventh century and is the only surviving manuscript portrait of a Bagratuni king. Physically it is a poor thing; a single, badly worn folio which was cut in half and reused as the lining of a binder (figure 6). It was discovered in 1911 by Bishop Mesrop Nshanian in a pile of discarded bindings in the print shop of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem. The Bishop recorded the incom-

the church of the Chora (Kariye Cami) in Istanbul features a most impressive turban, illus. in UNDERWOOD, 1967.

¹⁴⁸ For the use of "Islamic" dress in Georgian royal portraiture see below, n. 177. For a discussion of the parallel contemporary and later use of such "Islamic" dress in Byzantium see MANGO, 1981, 48-57, esp. 51-52.

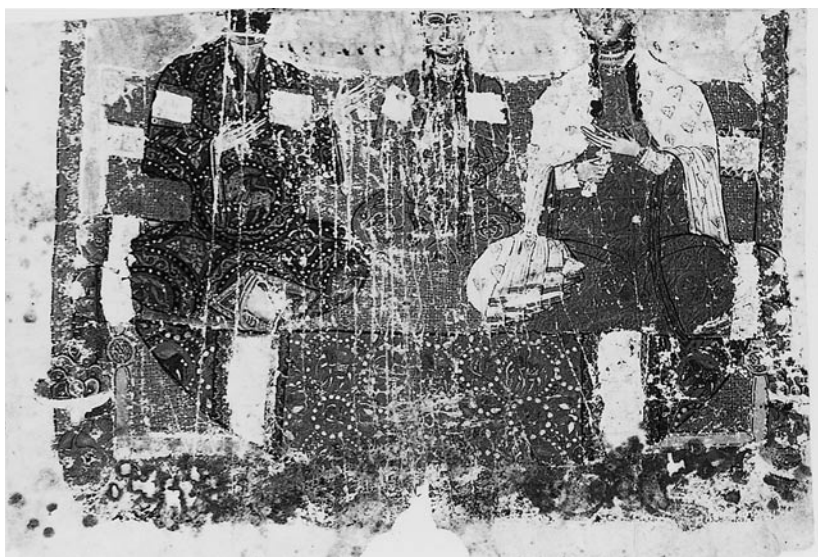


Fig. 6 — Gagik-Abas, Marem, and Goranduxt Bagratuni.
Jerusalem Ms 2556, fol. 135 bis recto.

plete colophon inscribed in two columns on the reverse of the fragment. The first column reads "...in whom dwells the Holy Spirit of the trinity in his graceful life, filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord, with immaculate reputation, erudite, he studied all the Holy Scriptures." The second "for the holy queen Goranduxt, and for Marem their offspring, that God may grant them to his church for long days, peaceful years, before..."¹⁵⁰

A colophon in the Gospel of Gagik-Abas (Jerusalem 2556, fol. 371v) identifies Goranduxt and Marem as the wife and daughter, respectively, of king Gagik-Abas of Kars¹⁵¹. Bishop Nshanean therefore correctly concluded that the three figures depicted on the portrait fragment are Gagik-Abas, who ruled from 1029-64 and was the third and final Bagratuni king of Kars, with his wife and child¹⁵². This identification also led the Bishop to conclude that the portrait was originally part of the Gospel of Gagik-Abas, and it was subsequently bound into that book as fol. 135 bis recto, inserted between the Gospels of Matthew and Mark¹⁵³. This attribution met with general scholarly acceptance until Thomas Mathews and Annie-Christine Daskalakis demonstrated that the page rulings of the portrait fragment and the script and language of its colophon differ from those of the Gospel of Gagik-Abas¹⁵⁴. Unquestionably, the portrait was not originally part of the text into which it is now bound.

While the colophon inscribed on the back of the damaged folio uses religious language, the portrait itself makes exclusive use of secular imagery. The royal family is shown seated, cross-legged, on a cushioned platform throne that is supported by the figures of lions, such as is found

¹⁴⁹ Illustrated in JONES, 1994, fig. 5. The likelihood of such painted decoration is diminished by the evidence of the lost statue of Gagik I, which featured a plain red tunic.

¹⁵⁰ Bishop NSHANEAN, 1911, 683-87 [in Armenian]. I use the translation provided by MATHEWS, DASKALAKIS, 1997, 475-484.

¹⁵¹ DER NERSESSIAN, 1984, 85-107.

¹⁵² Gagik/Abas was the grandson of Mušel, brother of Ašot III. DER NERSESSIAN, 1984, 85-107.

¹⁵³ Der Nersessian accepted the attribution of the page, dated the Gospel to the latter part of Gagik-Abas' reign, and assigned the same date to the newly-discovered family portrait. She also suggested that the miniature was originally located at the end of the Gospel of John, and that originally similar royal portraits were placed at the end of each of the four gospels. The colophon identifies Gagik-Abas with the title of *šahanšah*, which he assumed in 1045 following the abdication of the last Bagratuni king of Ani. DER NERSESSIAN, 1984, 86, 89.

¹⁵⁴ MATHEWS, DASKALAKIS, 1997, 475-77. This was also more briefly presented in MATHEWS, 1994, 62.

in contemporary representations of Arab rulers.¹⁵⁵ Bowls of fruit are placed to either side of the throne, which is covered with a textile richly decorated with pearl-edged medallions containing the figures of elephants¹⁵⁶. The cushions behind the three figures are covered with a brilliant red textile which is embellished with *tiraz*, bands of cloth inscribed with honorifics and distributed by Islamic courts in acknowledgment of rank and status¹⁵⁷.

Each of the three figures suffered various degrees of decapitation when the page was cut in half. Gagik-Abas retains only his bearded lower jaw, the very tip of his nose, and a small portion of his right earlobe. The queen's face is less truncated, ending directly below the eyes, and retains her blushing cheeks, small red mouth, and the golden pendant in her right ear¹⁵⁸. The face of the princess Maren is the best preserved of the three; only the portion above her eyebrows is missing. Like her mother, Maren has rosy cheeks and delicately delineated features, and the women also share the same hairstyle of long braids.

The family wears elaborate costumes, appropriate to their royal status¹⁵⁹. The king, seated to the viewer's left, is dressed in a purple and blue tunic decorated with pearled medallions containing horned ibexes holding three-lobed leaves in their mouths. The tunic's upper arms are further embellished with *tiraz*, and the hem is turned back to reveal a lining of blue embroidered with gold, the lower edge of the king's trousers, and one brown-shod foot¹⁶⁰. Goranduxt, to the far right, wears a crimson

¹⁵⁵ DER NERSESSIAN, 1984, 90. MATHEWS, DASKALAKIS, 1997, 78-79, incorrectly claim that the lion throne "has never been remarked."

¹⁵⁶ A late Sasanian/early Islamic ewer in the Sackler Gallery, Washington DC, is decorated with the figures of dancers, one of whom holds a bowl of fruit seemingly identical to that represented on the Bagratuni portrait fragment. Illustrated and discussed in GUNTER, JETT, 1992, 198-201.

¹⁵⁷ *El*, s.v. *Tiraz*, vol. 10 nos. 171/172, 534-38. For *tiraz* in Spanish-Umayyad art see DODDS, 105, 109, 218, 224, 226, 270.

¹⁵⁸ The paint where a left earring would have been depicted is worn away; one can reasonably assume that Goranduxt was originally shown wearing two earrings.

¹⁵⁹ The identification of Armenian versus Islamic-produced textiles is a subject in need of further study. Medieval Armenia was famous for its textiles, which were in great demand in Arab countries. For discussion and bibliography of Armenian textile production see TER-GHEWONDYAN, 1984, 204-205, 206-207.

¹⁶⁰ The posture displayed by Gagik-Abas', of crossed legs with one foot visible — it should be noted that the feet of both women remain tucked modestly out of sight — was diffused throughout the eastern Mediterranean. A second, earlier Armenian example is the east façade portrait of Gagik Arcruni, see JONES, 2001, fig. 14.1, and *ibid.*, 14.2 for a tenth-century Abbasid example, a medallion depicting the caliph Moqtadir. For Spanish-Umayyad examples see DODDS, 197, 199. For Georgian examples see EASTMOND, 1998, 92, fig. 53. For a modified example from Byzantium see the Darmstadt casket, *The Glory of Byzantium*, 227 fig. 151b.

tunic patterned with greenish-gold alternating motifs of birds inside eight-pointed stars and floral polygons. A white veil decorated with golden heart-shaped leaves is draped over her shoulders, and white cuffs embroidered with gold emerge from her tunic. She wears a blue and red bracelet on her left wrist, and three strands of pearls encircle her neck. The princess, seated between her parents, wears a red tunic adorned with blue-gray palmettes. Her shoulders are draped with a short blue scarf decorated with *tiraz*. Like her mother, she wears three strands of pearls.

Mathews and Daskalakis argue convincingly that the image functions to present Marem as her father's official heir¹⁶¹. They note that her significance is conveyed by the *tiraz* on her tunic, by her central placement, and by the gestures of the three figures¹⁶². Goranduxt's left hand is open, with the fingers extended toward her husband and daughter. The gesture made by Gagik-Abas is more emphatic. Both of his hands are open and the left is held away from his body. The king's extended hand visually links him with his daughter, drawing the viewer's eye across the space that separates the pair. This visual linkage is further reinforced by the *tiraz* strips worn by the father and daughter, which form a line rising through the king's figure to that of the princess. Marem holds her hands at chest level with the palms facing the viewer. This gesture, and her frontal gaze, brings the viewer's eye to rest on her figure.

It is most unfortunate that the mutilation of the page removed any evidence of royal headgear. However, the gold background retains traces of haloes that once surrounded the heads of all three figures, and this too must have originally signaled Marem's importance. While there are no surviving Bagratuni painted portraits with which to compare this page, a portrait of the royal Cilician family preserved in the Gospel of Queen Keran, dated to 1272, grants haloes to the king and queen but not to their children¹⁶³.

Mathews and Daskalakis suggest that the Bagratuni family portrait was originally part of a second manuscript commissioned by Gagik-Abas, most probably also a Gospel, of which nothing now survives¹⁶⁴. I suggest a comparison of the presentation of the king and queen reveals a different provenance. First, Goranduxt is rendered with greater frontality

¹⁶¹ MATHEWS, DASKALAKIS, 475-484.

¹⁶² ID., 479-480.

¹⁶³ Jerusalem, Armenian Patriarchate no. 2563, fol. 380. Color image in MATHEWS, WIECK, 1994, pl. 7. The haloes worn by Gagik-Abas, his wife and daughter are not mentioned by Der Nersessian or by Mathews and Daskalakis but are cited by CHOOKASZIAN, 2000, 37.

¹⁶⁴ MATHEWS, DASKALAKIS, 76-77.

than her higher-ranking spouse. Her hands are held in front of her chest, slightly to the left of the vertical axis of her body. This frontal posture is reflected in the even set of her shoulders, and the placement of her nose directly on a line with the vertical axis confirms that originally her face was also frontal. In contrast, Gagik-Abas' left hand is held away from his body and his right shoulder is higher than the left, suggesting that his body is twisted toward his daughter. While the paint on the upper edge of the page is badly worn, the kings' right earlobe — but not his left — is visible, suggesting that originally his head was also turned toward Maren. Not only is Goranduxt granted greater frontality than her husband, she is also significantly larger: 25% wider at the shoulders, 11.3% wider at the knees and 4.3% taller¹⁶⁵. Her placement on the right hand side of the composition may also signal her prominence if we consider the hierarchy of placement exhibited by the sculptures at Halbat, which place the figure of king Smbat II to the right of his younger brother¹⁶⁶. And finally, the object held in Goranduxt's right hand — possibly a rolled scroll — may also have conveyed her prominence to a contemporary viewer¹⁶⁷.

I can think of only one reasonable explanation for the preferential treatment given the figure of the queen: that it was she, and not Gagik-Abas, who commissioned the manuscript in which this portrait originally appeared. If correct, this renders the battered image all the more precious, as it is the sole unequivocal example of female royal patronage to survive from Bagratuni Armenia¹⁶⁸. It serves to conclusively document

¹⁶⁵ Based on measurements taken from the reproduction published in MATHEWS, WIECK, pl. 7, Goranduxt measures 5.5 cm. across the shoulders, 8.9 cm. across the knees, and 9.8 cm. from her chin to the lowest margin of her robes. The corresponding measurements for Gagik-Abas are 4.4, 8.0, 9.4; for Maren 4.0, 5.9, 7.1.

¹⁶⁶ For a tenth-century example of this hierarchical placement see above note 142. Later Cilician portraits which depict both a king and queen invariably place the king to viewer's left, as is seen in the Bagratuni manuscript portrait, but in the Cilician examples this placement is attributable in each case to the presence of the figure of Christ — the king is placed on Christ's right, or favored, side. This placement is also found in the depiction of non-royal Cilician donors. DER NERSESSIAN, 1984, figs. 107, 117; EVANS, figs. 6, 8.

¹⁶⁷ The roughly contemporary image of Zoë and Constantine IX Monomachos in the south gallery of Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, depicts the royal couple flanking the enthroned Christ. Zoë holds a rolled scroll in her hands, a document recording her generous gifts. The images later erected in the same gallery by Alexios and Irene Komnenos shows the empress holding a similar scroll. Illustrations, discussion, and bibliography of both images in CORMACK, 1981, 131-49.

¹⁶⁸ The so-called Gospels of Queen Mlk'ē (San Lazzaro 1144) contains two medieval colophons. The first was erased to accommodate the colophon added by a post-medieval owner of the manuscript. Parts of the original inscription are still legible, however, and

the participation of royal women in the production of medieval Armenian art. The message of political legitimacy and succession conveyed by the portrait group also suggests that the queen was publicly involved with matters of the utmost political consequence.

A firm dating of the page could further our knowledge, but it is likely to remain circumstantial. According to general scholarly opinion it was produced after Gagik assumed the title of *šahanšah* in 1045 but before the 1054 assault on Kars by the Seljuk sultan Tughral¹⁶⁹. The *tiraz* worn by the king may suggest a later date. According to Matthew of Edessa, Gagik-Abas arranged a subterfuge to rid himself of the Seljuk sultan Alp Arslan, Tughral's successor. Gagik-Abas received the sultan's envoy seated upon a black-cushioned throne and dressed in black garments, explaining that he was in mourning for Tughral, who had recently died. Intrigued, Alp Arslan paid Gagik-Abas a visit, accompanied by "his whole army." He invested the king in royal robes, and was in turn feted by Gagik-Abas with a banquet of roast lamb¹⁷⁰. While it cannot be confirmed that the robes worn by Gagik-Abas in his portrait are those that were presented to him by Alp Arslan, there is also nothing to deny such an identification and the possible date of production of this work should therefore be extended to 1063.

Whatever its date, the miniature documents the existence of a secular expression of Bagratuni kingship which fully incorporates Islamic courtly iconography. But does this painting reflect contemporary artistic developments — perhaps related to the dissolution of the Bagratuni kingdom or to outside influence — or is it an example of an alternate tradition of Armenian royal representation which coexisted with that developed by the Bagratuni kings? We have seen that while the representations of the Bagratuni kings of Armenia do not incorporate elements of foreign regalia, such elements are present in the images of Bagratuni princes, as is seen at Sanahin. Such incorporation is also found in the wider Caucasian tradition of royal representation, as is

seem to attribute the book to the patronage of Gagik Arcruni. A second colophon, contemporary with the first, describes how the book was given to the church of the Holy Cross at Varag by Mlk'ē, presumably Gagik's wife. As noted by MATHEWS, 1994, 57, it is not possible to determine to what degree, if any, Mlk'ē was responsible for the production of the manuscript. In my opinion her colophon, which focuses solely on her patronage of the monastery, does not justify the claim that she was also the patron of the manuscript. A possible explanation for the addition of her colophon is that she donated the existing book to the monastery at Varag after Gagik's death.

¹⁶⁹ DER NERSESSIAN, 1984; MATHEWS, DASKALAKIS, 477.

¹⁷⁰ MATTHEW OF EDESSA, 104.



Fig. 7 — Gagik I Arçruni. East facade, church of the Holy Cross, Alt'amar.

demonstrated by the Bagrationi portraits at Oshki¹⁷¹. The tenth-century portrait of Gagik Arcruni on the east facade of his palace church also appropriates and adapts Islamic courtly iconography in a manner which parallels that seen in the portrait of Gagik-Abas and his family (figure 7)¹⁷². These examples suggest that the manuscript portrait records a second tradition of Bagratuni royal representation. If true, this also suggests that the visual expression of power associated with the senior Bagratuni royal house was set apart from that of other Armenian royal families.

Despite the surety conveyed by the manuscript portrait, Marem did not succeed her father. In 1064 Ani fell to the Seljuks, and soon thereafter Gagik-Abas sold his lands to Byzantium and immigrated to Capadocia. By the early twelfth century the displaced dynasties of Armenia disappear from the historic record. The Armenian kings of Cilicia who rose to power in the following century were influenced by Crusader and Byzantine art and protocol, and developed their own unique expressions of rulership¹⁷³.

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¹⁷¹ For the use of "Islamic" iconography in Georgian imagery see EASTMOND, 1998, 91-92, 110.

¹⁷² The development by Gagik Arcruni of a particular visual expression of Armenian rulership is discussed by the author in a forthcoming book and in JONES, 2001.

¹⁷³ See EVANS, 2001; EVANS, 1997; DER NERSESSIAN, 1993; COWE, 1997, 49-59.

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